Vol.11

ROKUDA NOBORU

VOL. 11

F

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LUCKY DEVIL

F

VOL.11
LUCKY DEVIL

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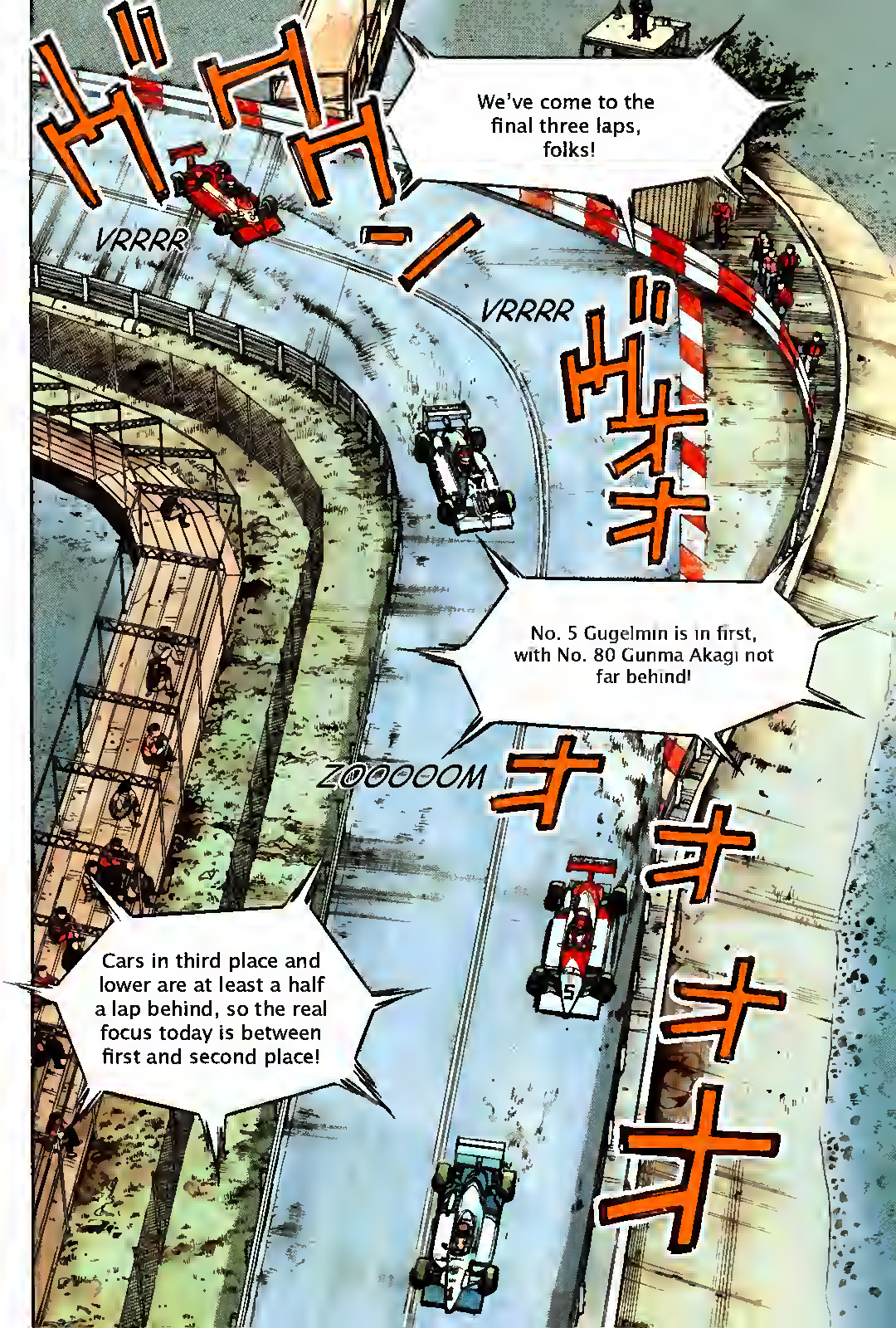
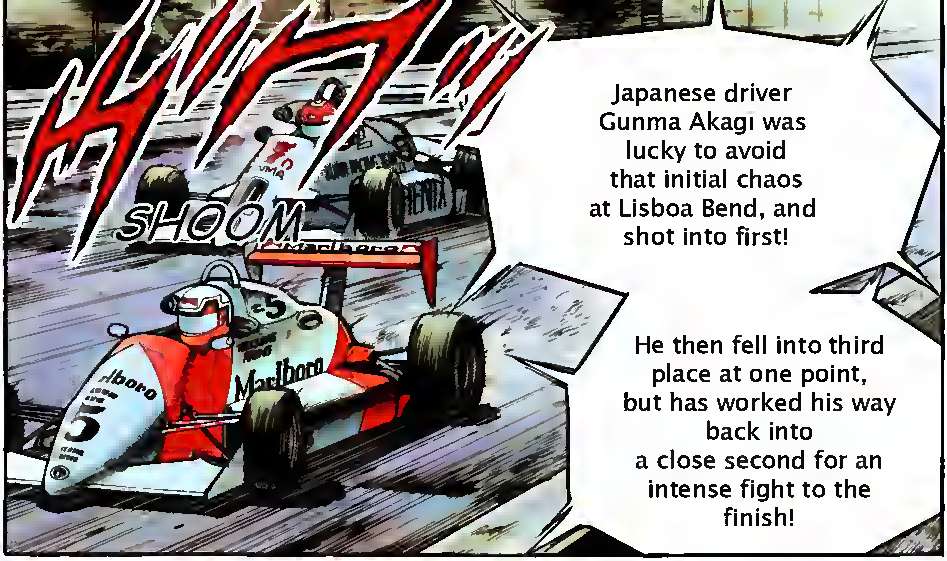
Chapter 1:
A Smashing Success

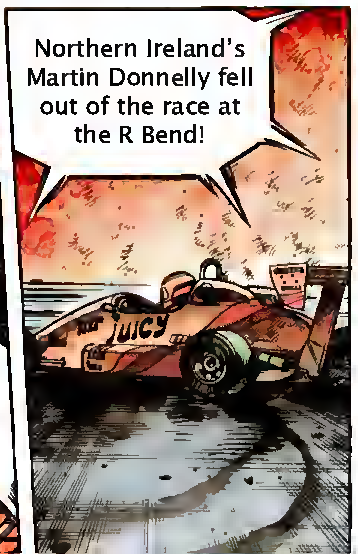

We've come to the final three laps, folks!
VRRRR
VRRRR
No. 5 Gugelmin is in first, with No. 80 Gunma Akagi not far behind!
ZOOOOOM
Cars in third place and lower are at least a half a lap behind, so the real focus today is between first and second place!


SHOOM
Marlboro
Japanese driver Gunma Akagi was lucky to avoid that initial chaos at Lisboa Bend, and shot into first!
He then fell into third place at one point, but has worked his way back into a close second for an intense fight to the finish!

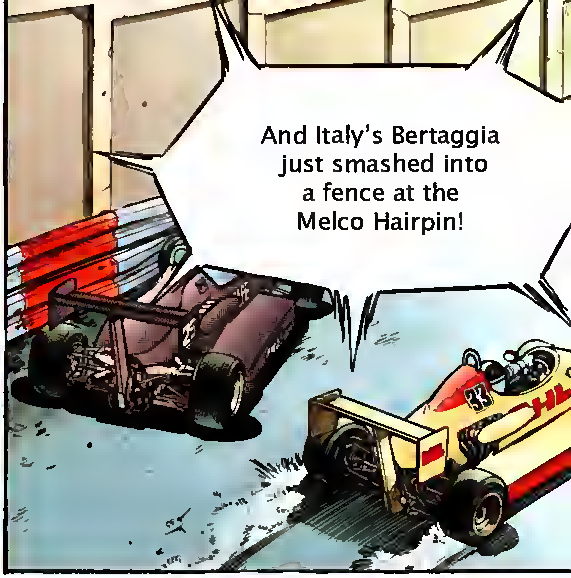
VRROOOM
カアアア
KUROI RACING TEAM
PHENIX
Taking a look at how many cars have been crushed in the Japanese driver's wake so far...

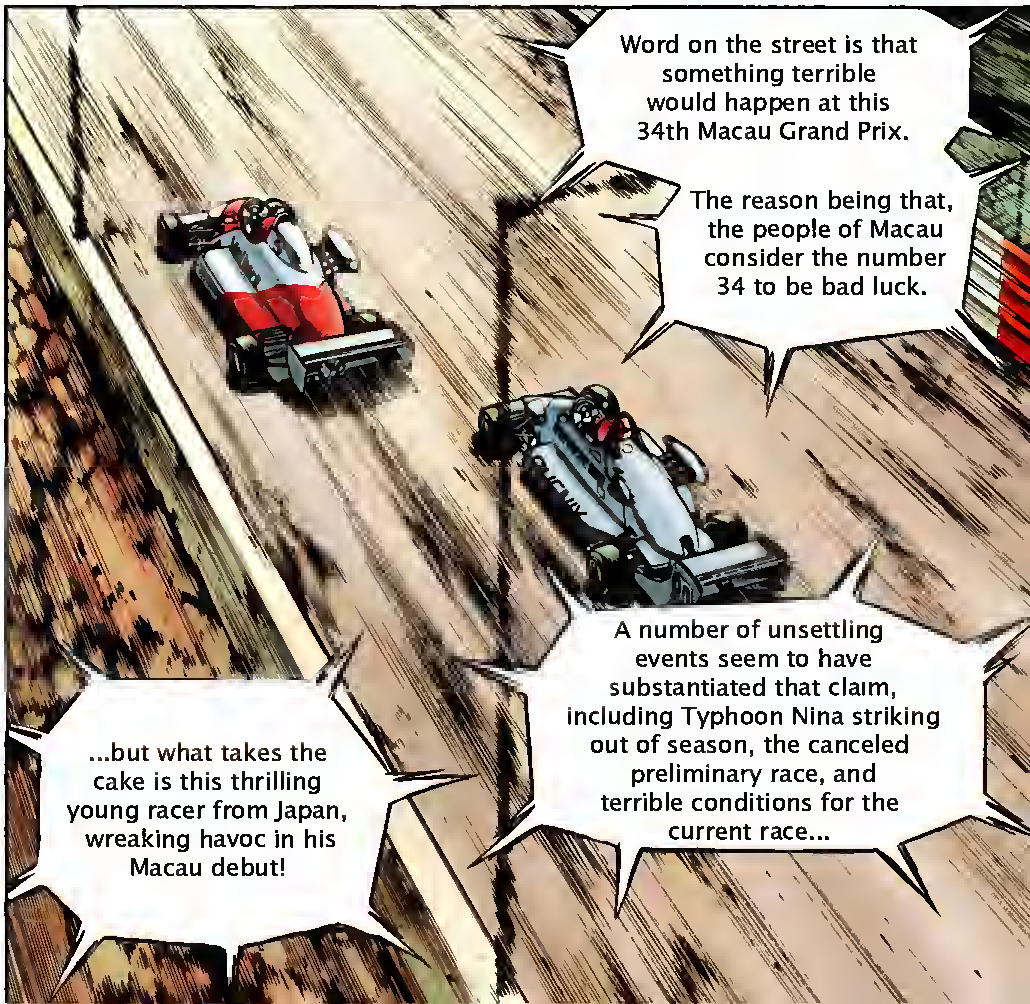
J. Paley of England crashed at the Lisboa Bend!

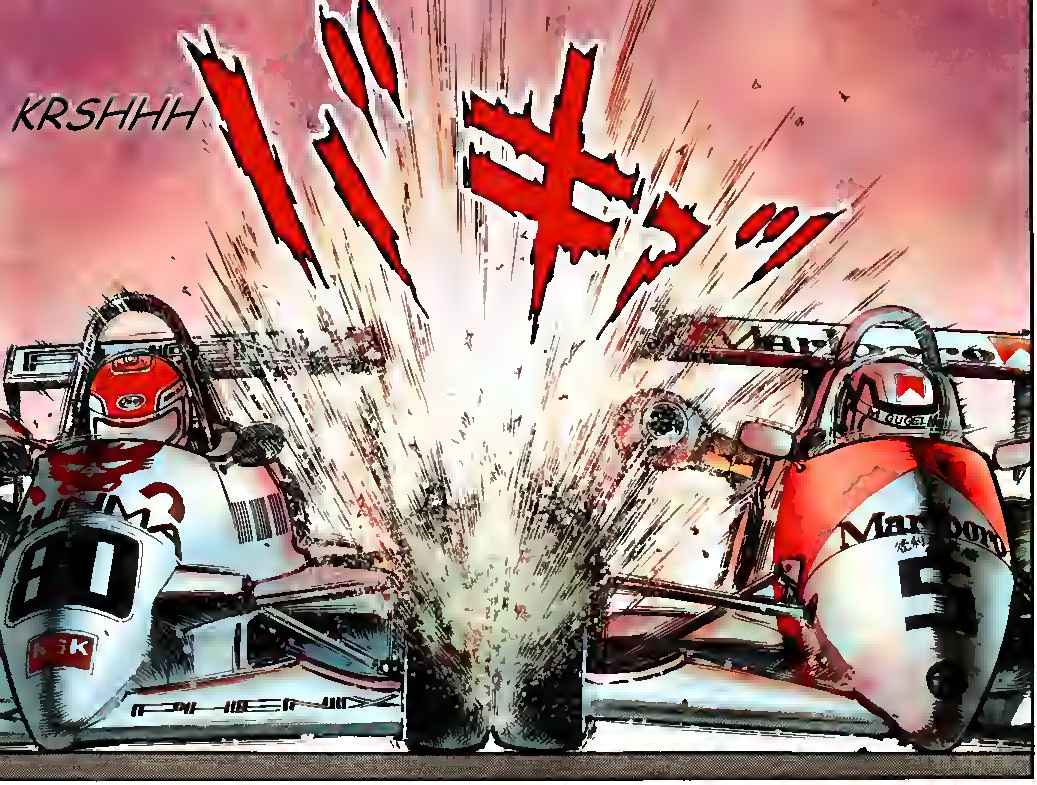
J. Lammers of the Netherlands was suspended in midair outside of the course, marking his exit!

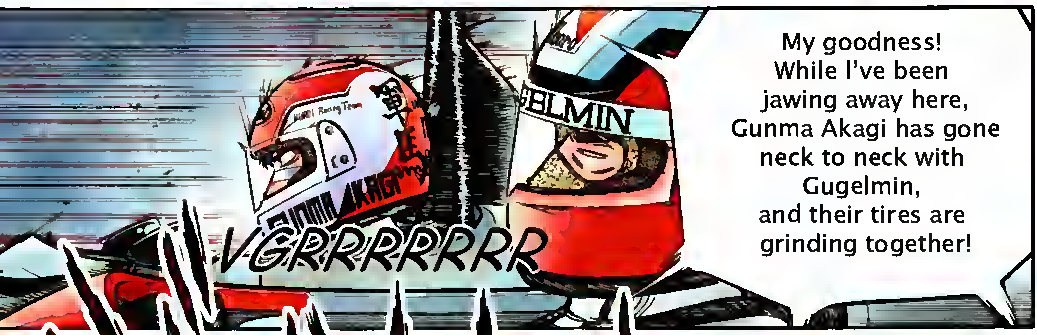

Northern Ireland's Martin Donnelly fell out of the race at the R Bend!
JUICY

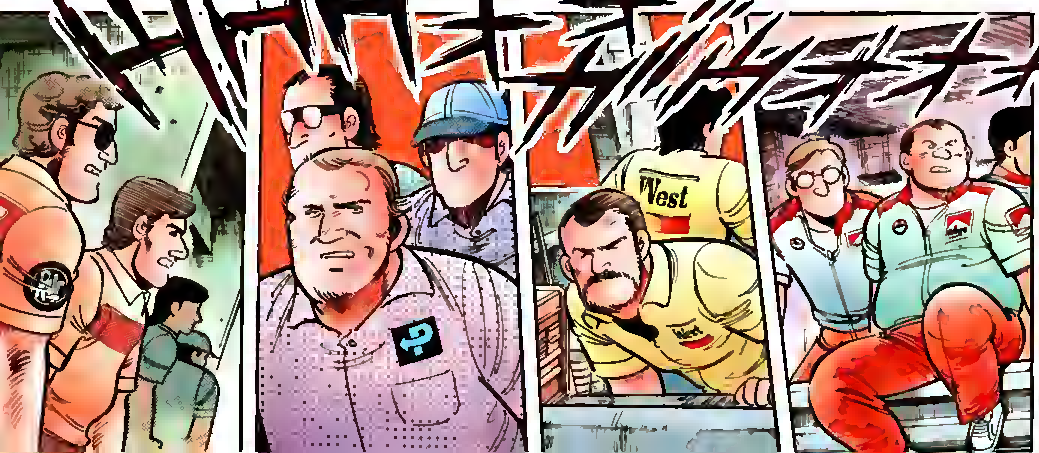
Including one car on an earlier lap, Japan's Gunma Akagi has forced a total of five cars out of the race!
YAK
YAK

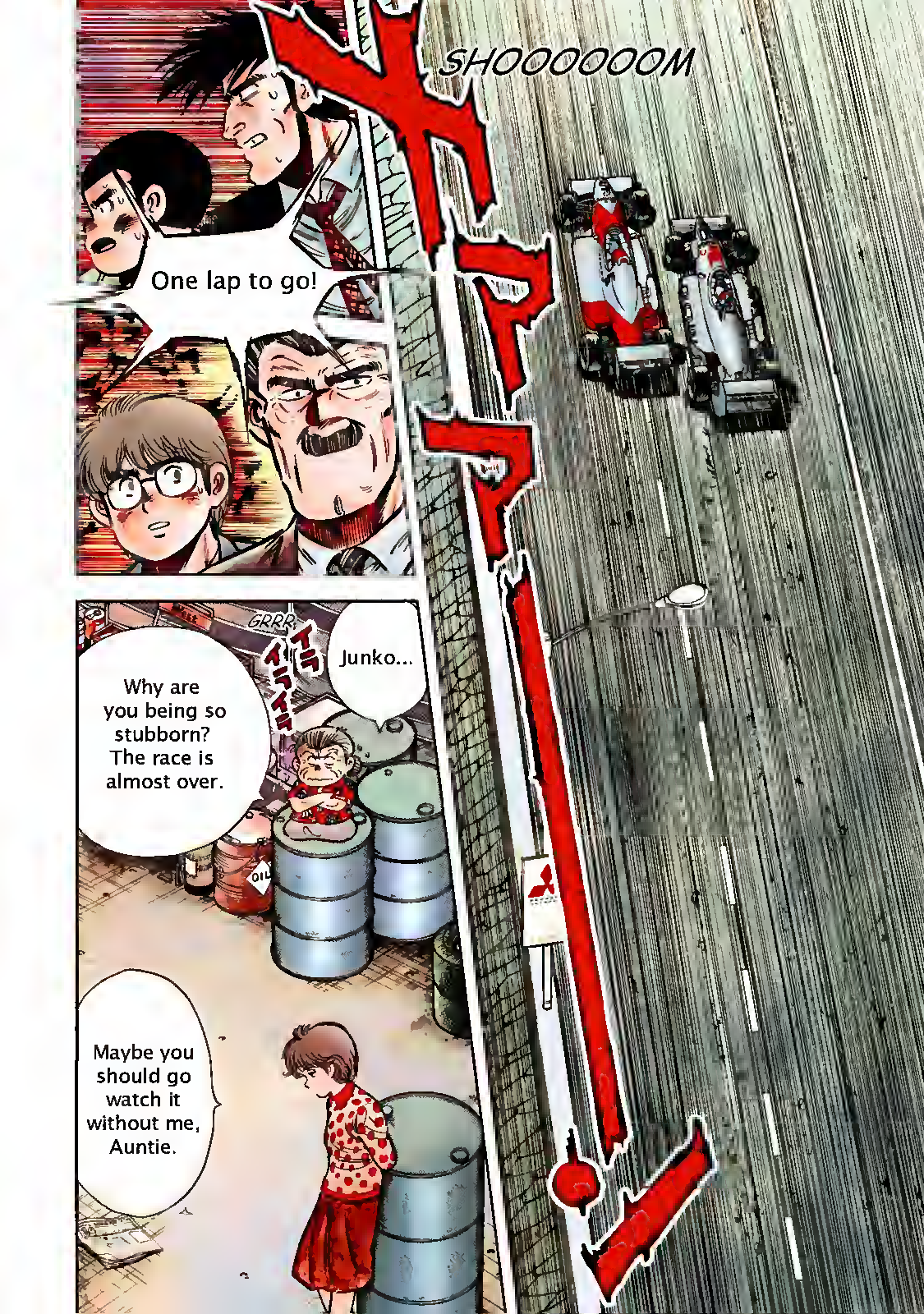

And Italy's Bertaggia just smashed into a fence at the Melco Hairpin!


Word on the street is that something terrible would happen at this 34th Macau Grand Prix.
The reason being that, the people of Macau consider the number 34 to be bad luck.
A number of unsettling events seem to have substantiated that claim, including Typhoon Nina striking out of season, the canceled preliminary race, and terrible conditions for the current race...
...but what takes the cake is this thrilling young racer from Japan, wreaking havoc in his Macau debut!

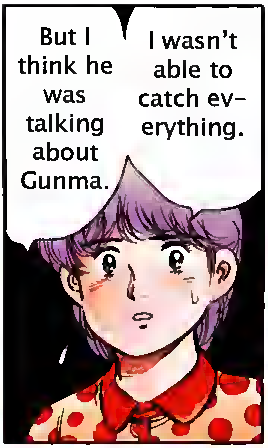

KRSHHH
Marlboro


VGRRRRRRR
My goodness! While I've been jawing away here, Gunma Akagi has gone neck to neck with Gugelmin, and their tires are grinding together!

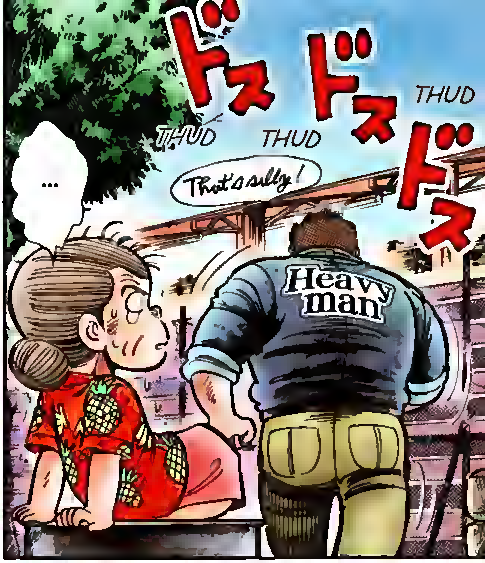

West

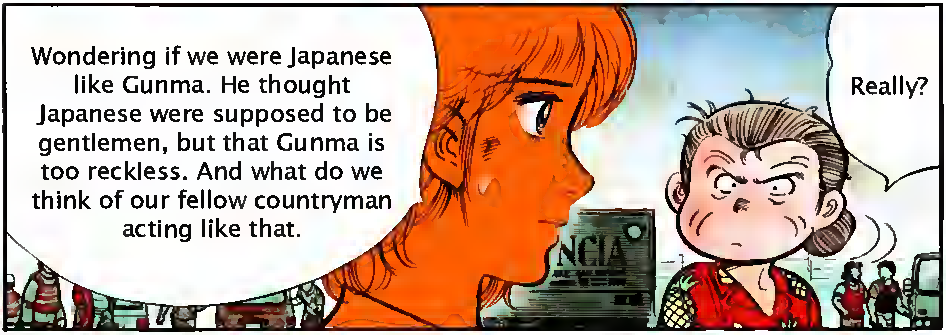

SHOOOOOOM
One lap to go!
GRRR
イライライラ
Junko...
Why are you being so stubborn? The race is almost over.
OIL
Maybe you should go watch it without me, Auntie.

HM?
Are you Japanese!?
...you'd be raped in a heartbeat!
Are you kidding me? If I leave you alone with all these hairy foreigners...
YAK YAK GUNMA AKAGI! YAK YAK? YAK YAK YAK YAK!
Please don't! I've vowed to stay true to my dead husband's memory! Stay back!
FWOOP
Good heav-ens! You must be one of the rapists!
Shell
Sigh ...
Hey...
If you must have your way, take that one! She's much younger than I!
YAK YAK DANGEROUS YAK YAK YAK.


But I think he was talking about Gunma.
I wasn't able to catch ev-erything.

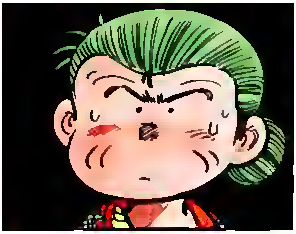
What on earth did that monster want from us? He just said his piece and left.


ドス ドス ドス
THUD
THUD
THUD
...
That's silly!
Heavy man

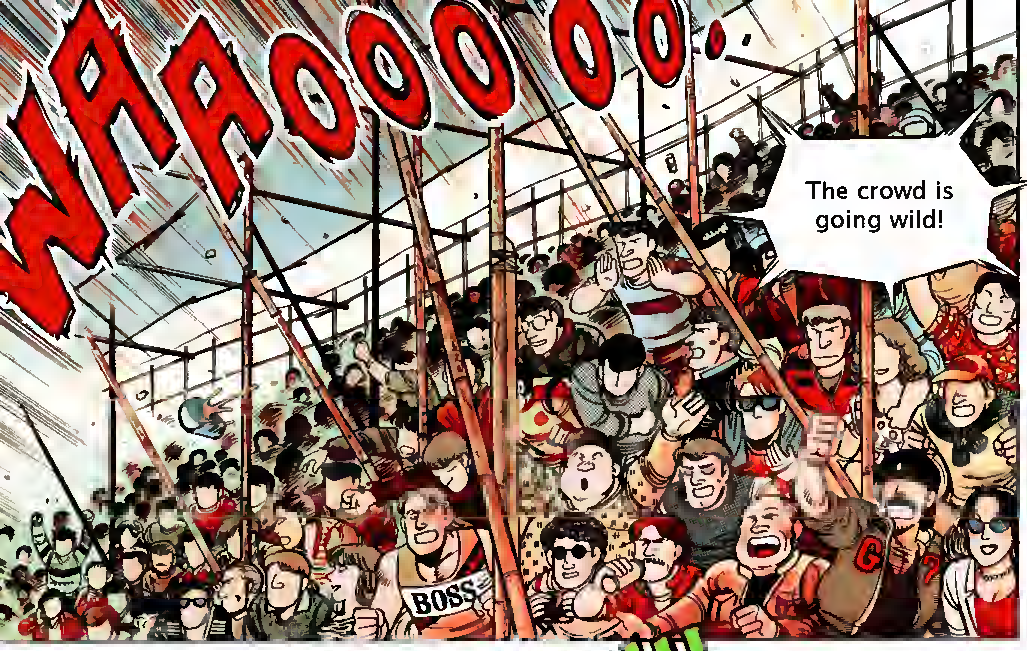

Wondering if we were Japanese like Gunma. He thought Japanese were supposed to be gentlemen, but that Gunma is too reckless. And what do we think of our fellow countryman acting like that.
Really?

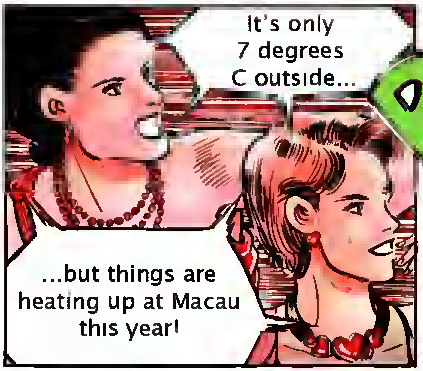
VROOOOH
Even if it's only the final lap!

Let's go watch that race, Junko!
That's it! We can't just stand back here listening to the announcer!
SHOOP

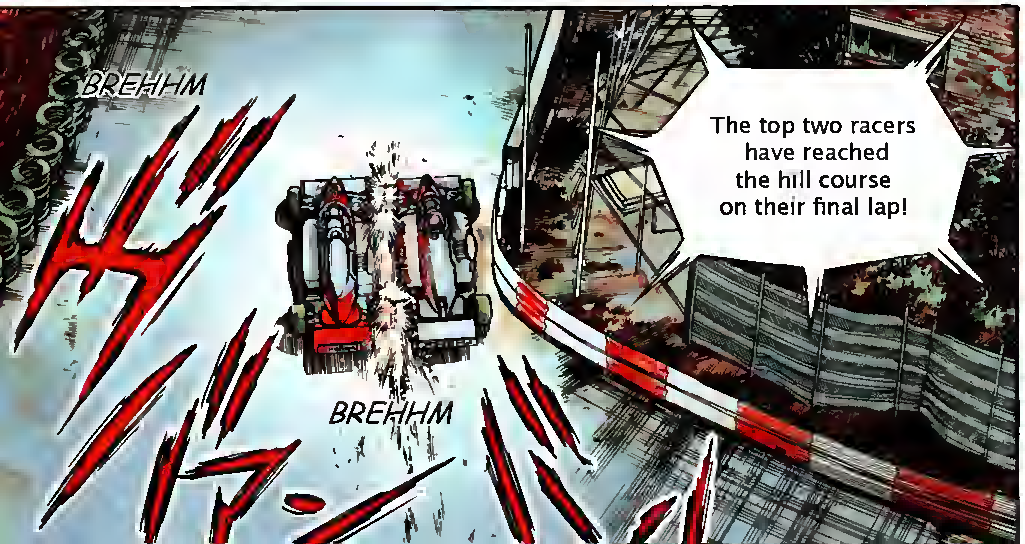


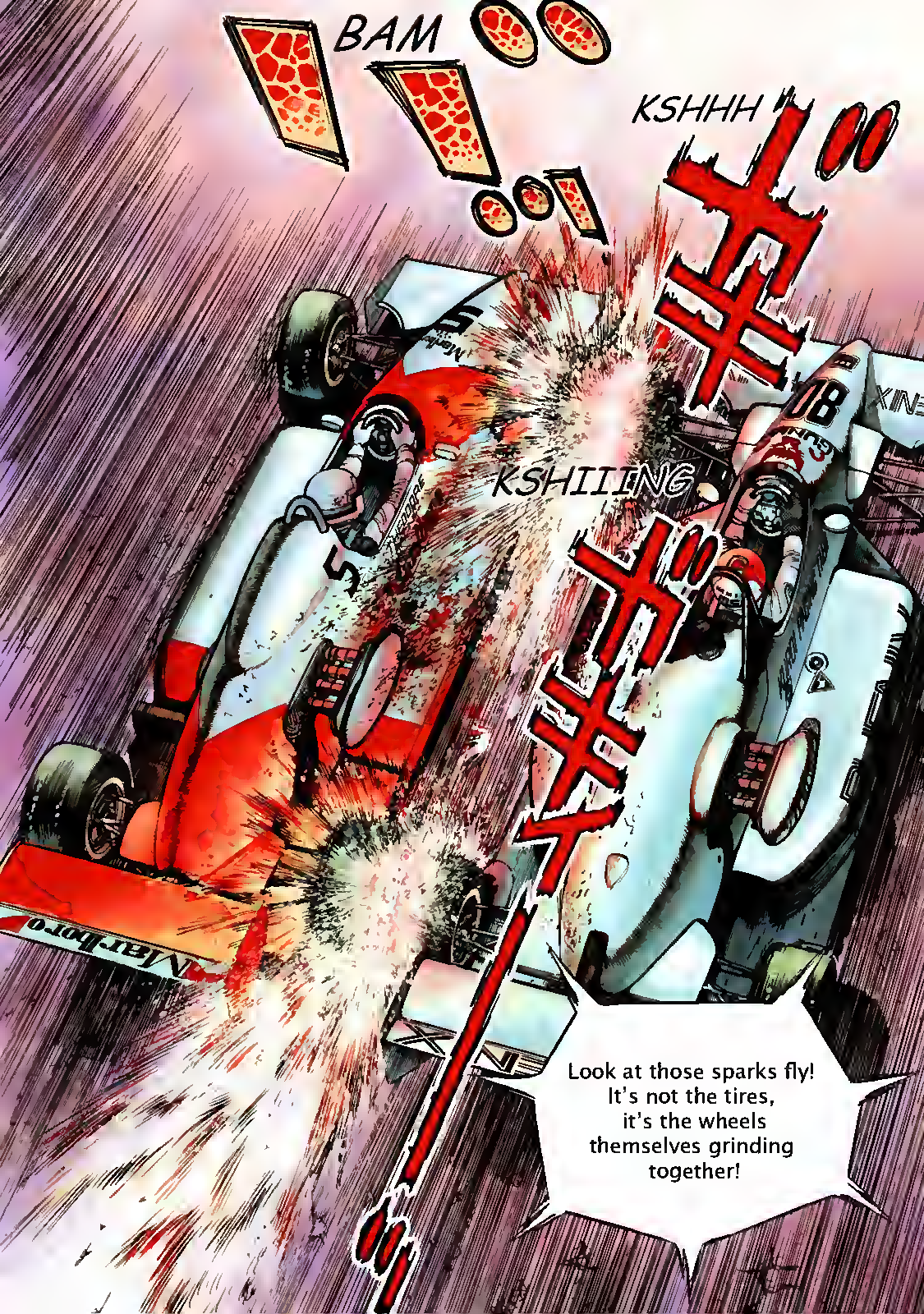
Seems like Gunma's riled up a lot of people here.

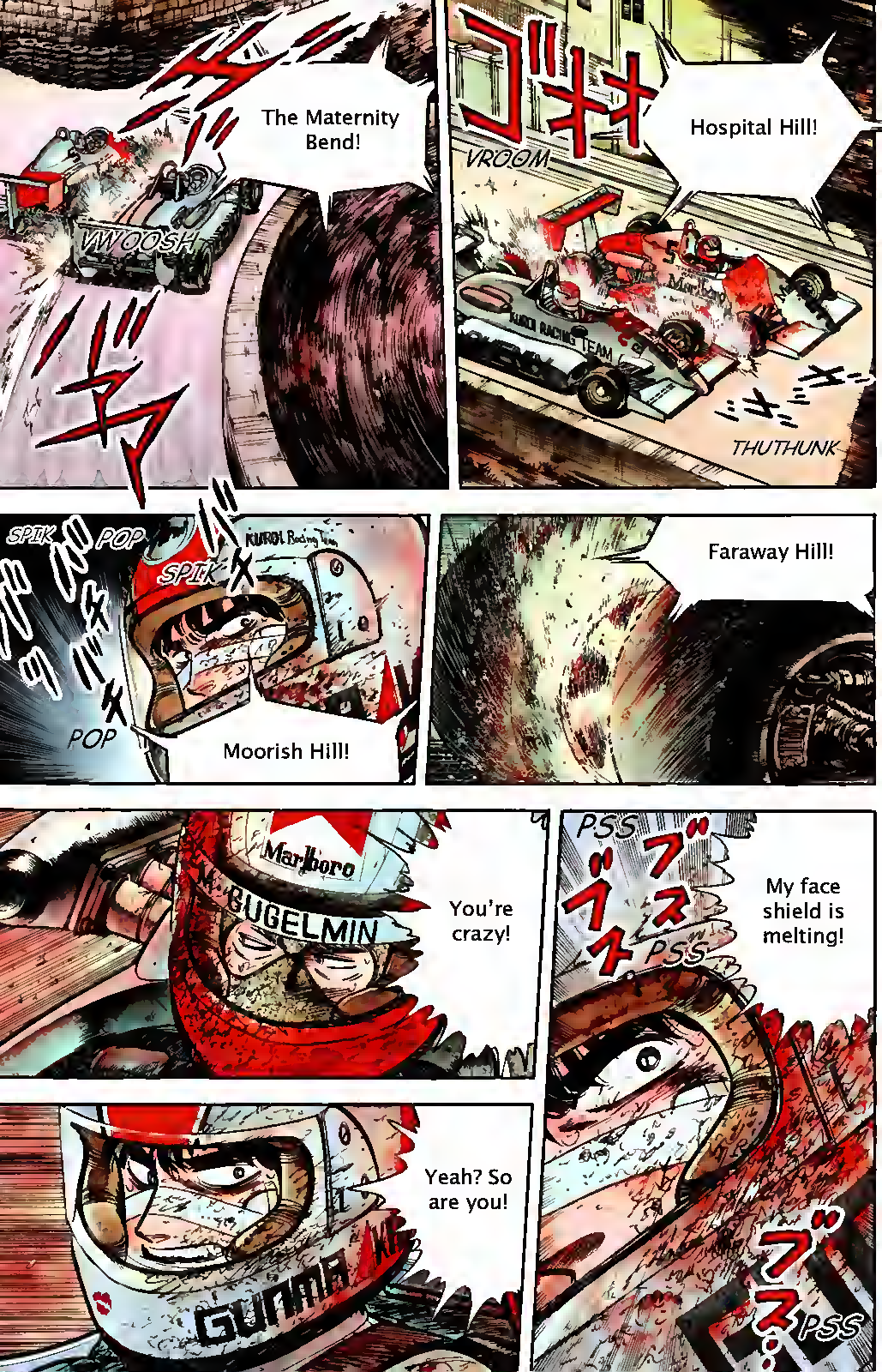

WAOOOOO
The crowd is going wild!
BOSS

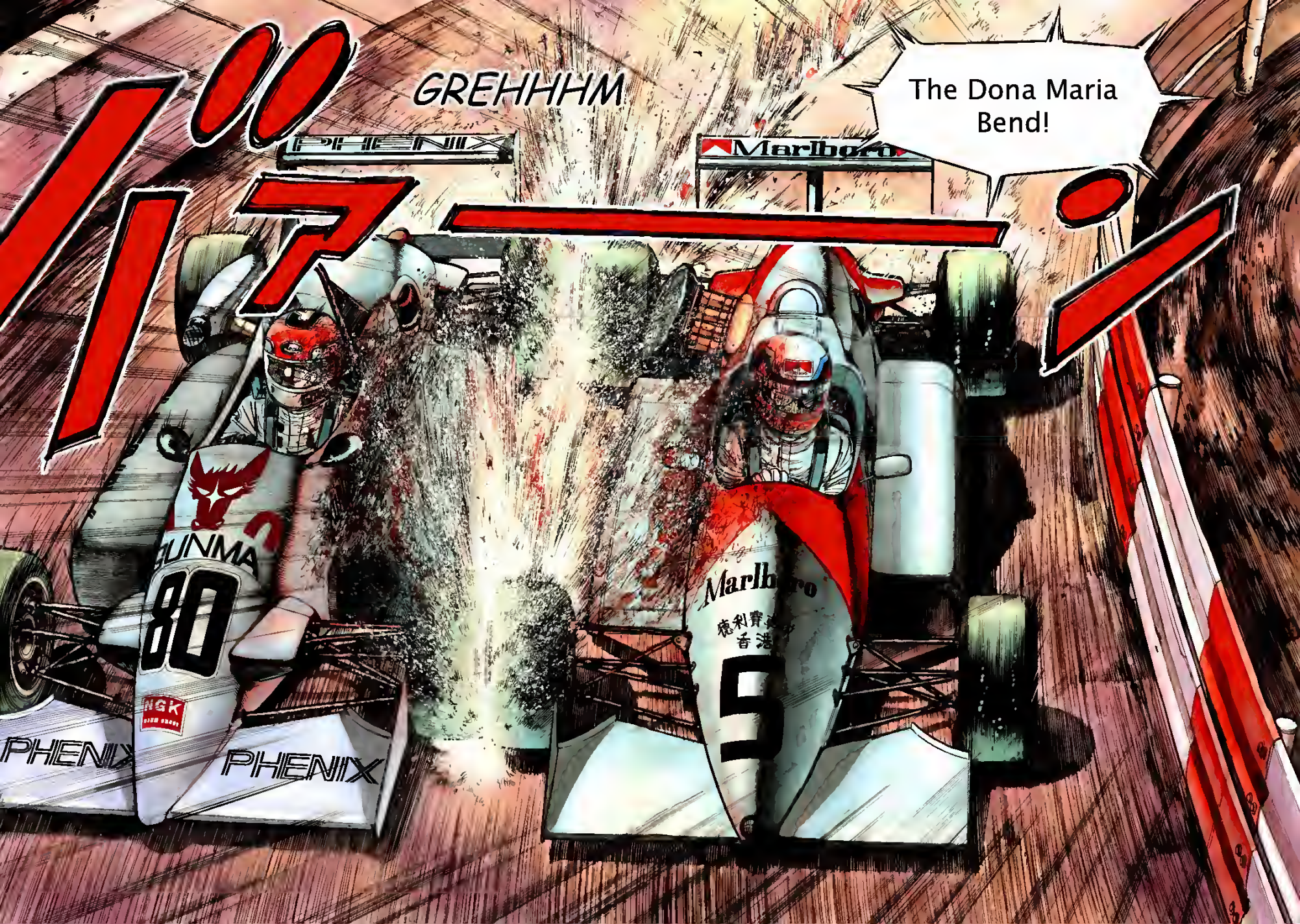

It's only 7 degrees C outside...
...but things are heating up at Macau this year!

BOUUU
Look at this energy!
It's a melting pot of excitement!


BREHHM
BREHHM
The top two racers have reached the hill course on their final lap!

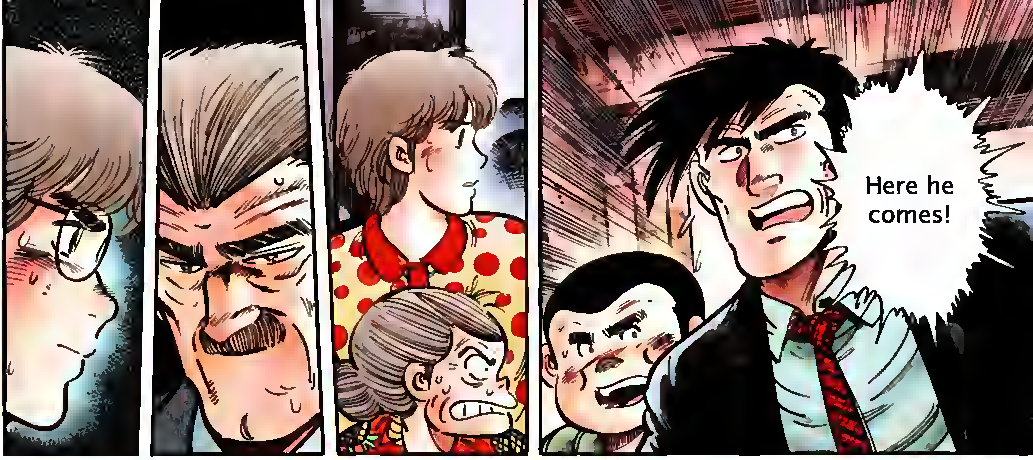

BAM
KSHHH
KSHIIING
Look at those sparks fly! It's not the tires, it's the wheels themselves grinding together!


The Maternity Bend!
VWOOSH
Hospital Hill!
VROOM
THUTHUNK
SPIK
POP
SPIK
POP
Moorish Hill!
Faraway Hill!
Marlboro
BUGELMIN
You're crazy!
PSS
My face shield is melting!
PSS
Yeah? So are you!
GURNARD
PSS

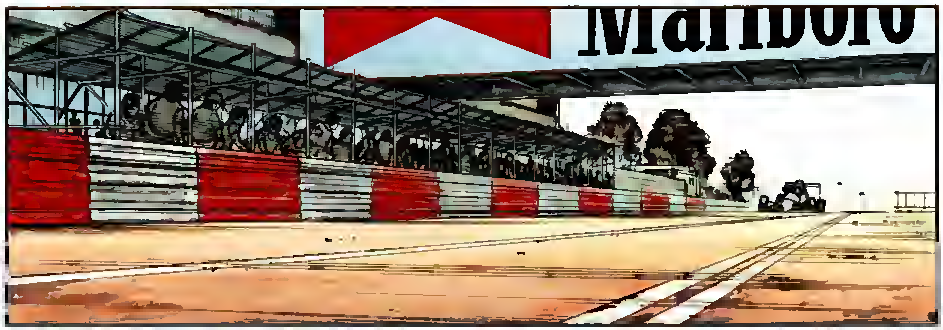

GREHHHM
The Dona Maria Bend!
PHENIX
Marlboro
GUNMA
80
NGK
PHENIX
PHENIX
Marlboro
9

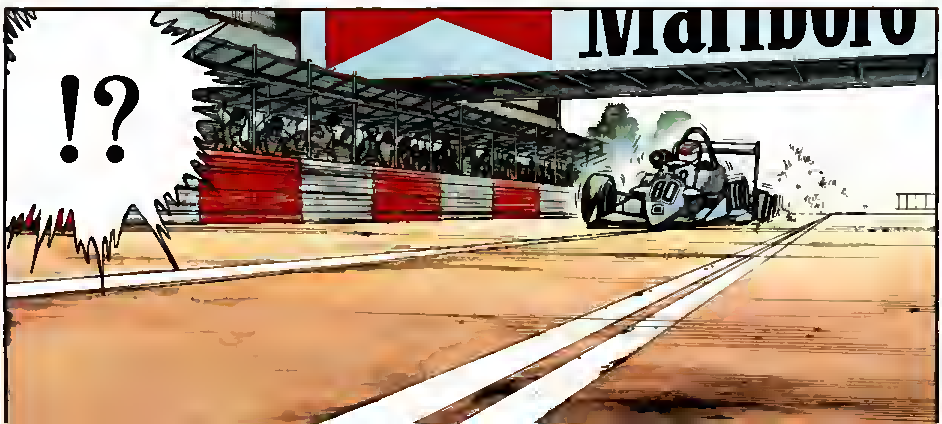
The Dona Maria Bend!

GREHHHM
PHENIX
80
NGK
PHENIX
PHENIX

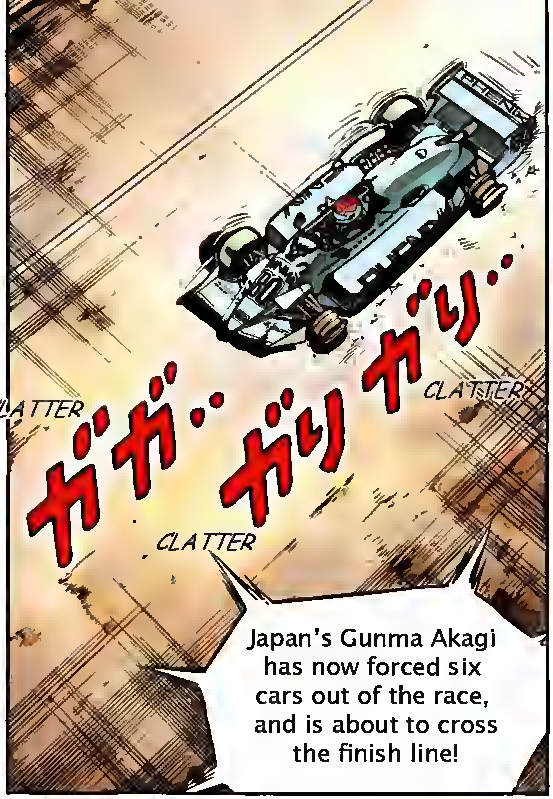

Here he comes!

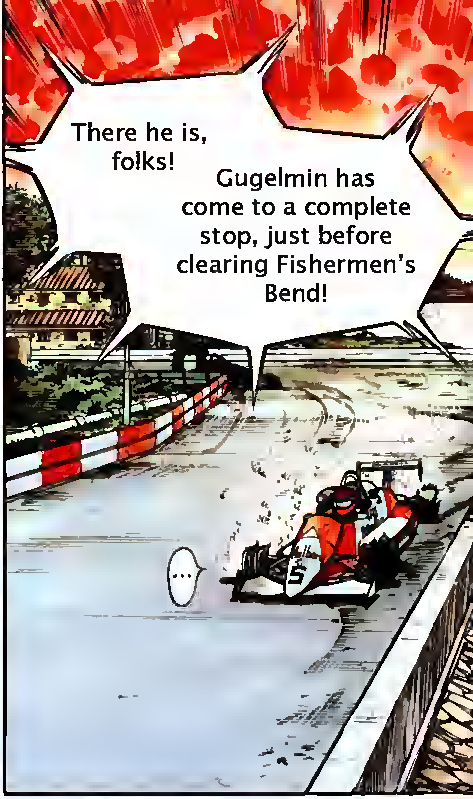
Marlboro

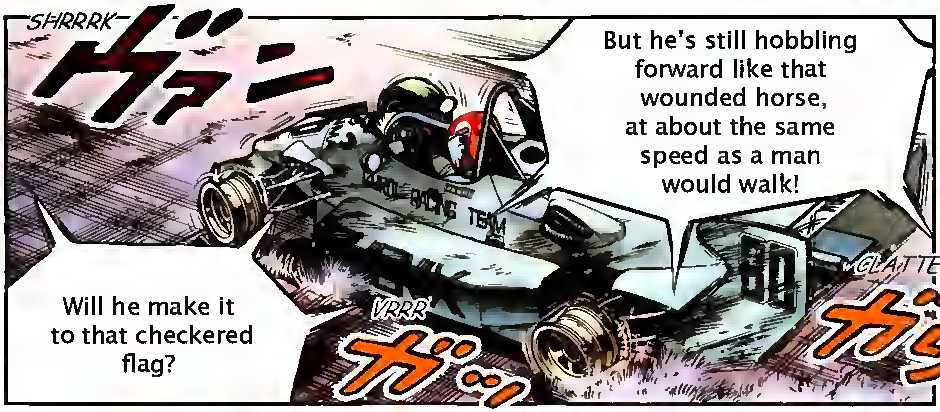

Marlboro


Marlboro
!?

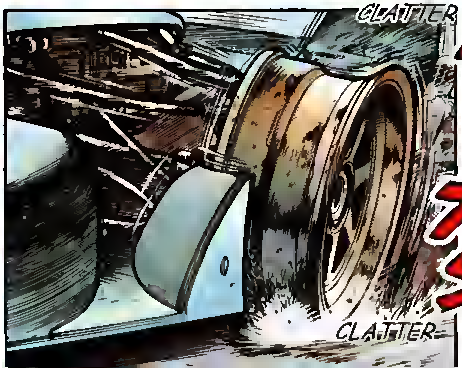
VRRRRRRR
Look at this! Gunma Akagi has lost both of his left tires!
CLANG
CLANG
CLANG
RRRRRRR
How can I describe this? It's like a dying horse hobbling its way to the finish line!
And what about Gugelmin!? What happened to Gugelmin!?


CLATTER
ガガ..ガリガリ..
CLATTER
CLATTER
Japan's Gunma Akagi has now forced six cars out of the race, and is about to cross the finish line!


There he is, folks!
Gugelmin has come to a complete stop, just before clearing Fishermen's Bend!
...


SHRRRK
ヴァーン
But he's still hobbling forward like that wounded horse, at about the same speed as a man would walk!
Will he make it to that checkered flag?
VRRR
ガ...
CLATTER
ガリ..

Hang in there!
Almost there, Gunma!


CLATTER
ガリガリ
CLATTER

WAO
KUROI Racing
Hmm ...
Looks like it was worth coming to Macau, Dad.
SEIKO精工表
THUMP
プス～ッ
CLATTER
ガガ…
THUMP
プス～ッ
The engine's sputtering. It's about to go out on him.

IRK
WA
AA
They've just waved the checkered flag, folks! Japan's Gunma Akagi has taken first place!
PHENIX
SPOOT
Shell
Marlboro
BARCLAY
FIAMM

Chapter 2:
Flight in Triumph

VEEEN

ゴ

Extreme racing at its worst

One accident after another

The crowd was in an uproar

VEEEEEEEEN

Macau's 34th GrandPrix Champion...

Is Japanese! A historic feat!

Bruised and bloody, he won it

Gunma Akagi (Age 20)

No place for violence in racing

Organizers express their discontent

JapanAsia

Macau's 34th Grand Prix Champion...
Is Japanese! A historic feat!
Bruised and bloody, he won it
Gunma Akagi (Age 20)
VEEEEEEEN

VEEEN

ゴキ

The crowd was in an uproar

One accident after another

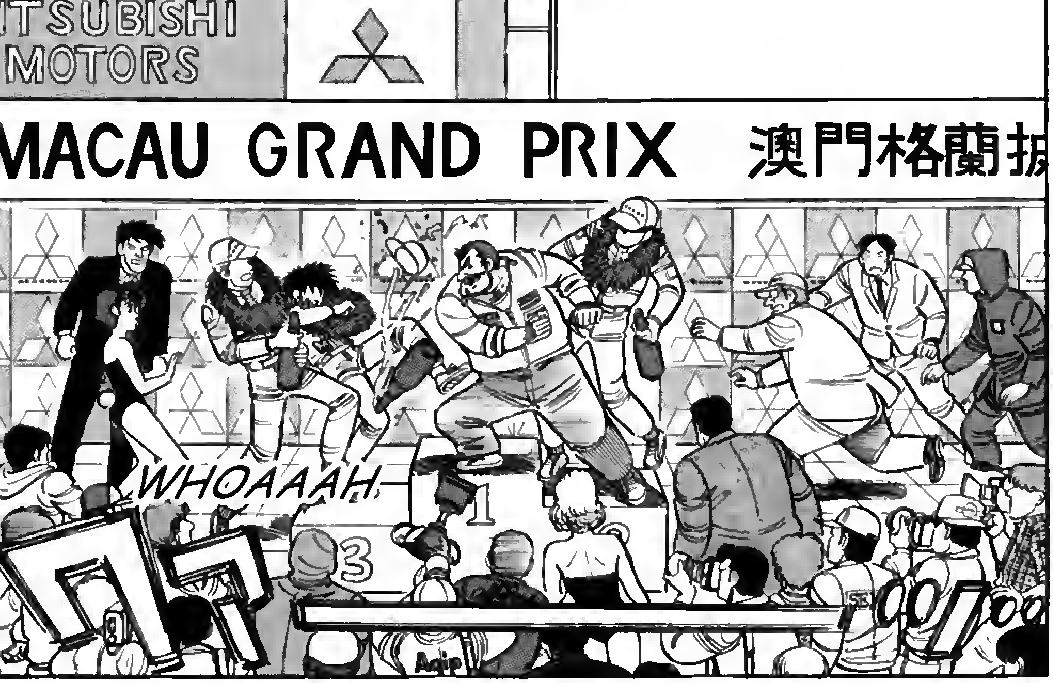
Extreme racing at its worst

JapanAsia

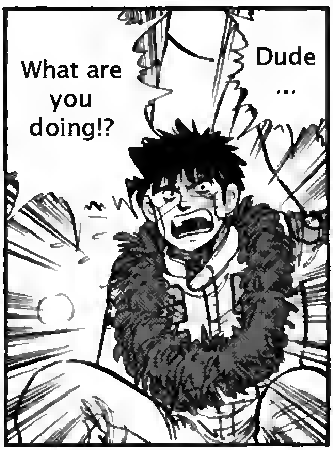
No place for violence in racing

Organizers express their discontent

ゴォォォ
VEEEEEEN
Exhausted winner passes out in front of finish line found sleeping in cockpit
My oh my... "Boos and Anger at the Podium" it says.
TWITCH
HA HA HA
はっはっは
Next!
Exhausted winner passes out in front of finish line,found sleeping in cockpit
...
BARCLA
shell


ITSUBISHI
MOTORS
MACAU GRAND PRIX 澳門格蘭扳
WHOAAAH
1
3
Aoip

YAKITY YAK!
YAK YAK
YAK!
YAK YAK
YAK YAK YAK!
YAK YAK YAK!
BARCLAY
FIAMM
Shell


What are you doing!?
Dude ...

I'll kick yer ass, you...
I'll...

How dare you humiliate me in front of all these people!
You big dumb bastard!
YAK
YAK

I can't... move...
Crap!
THUNK
SPOOT
Gu...Gun ma...!
...
DIRTY ROTTEN YAK YAK YAK!
SEIKO
If I see him again I'll kill him!
Foreign bastard...
Dam-mit.
NO SMOKING
FASTEN SEATBELT
VEEEH
Uh huh.
...
We're almost to Narita, Gunma.

FWEEEEEN
キイイイィーーン
JapanAsia

NEW
YAK
ガ"
ガ"YAK

YAK
YAK
YAK
YAK
Get a load of this welcoming committee. As if a scandal-ridden celebrity and his lover just landed.
Hey ...
I'm a star now.
Heh heh heh heh...
Hold on, I wanna avoid getting mobbed. I'm gonna go ahead!
HEH
HEH
What the hell's he doin' here?
That's Otoya Yamaguchi.

Just heal up, all right?
Tsh. Whatever.
I can't make it. Dad took another plane home, and I've got a bunch of stuff to take care of.
Come on, Yuma! What about my press conference?
Well, I better be off now, Gunma.
Look forward to it, bro!
I think we'll be meeting again soon, Gunma.
Yeah, when I go visit you in the hospital.
What's he doin' with Otoya?
Whoa, whoa, whoa...
Hey!

YAK
YAK
YAK
Gunma, the press is ready for you.
What was that all about?
Getting all chummy like that.
仲よさそうに…
The kid's tired, so keep itunder 10 minutes.
Ouch.
First of all, congratu-lations on your win.
What poor eyes he has!
* He must mean "pure"
Huh?
Hey, Akagi!
Gunma …
How does it feel to be the first Japanese F3 racer to ever win at Macau?
…

How come Yuma's all chummy with Otoya?
What's going on with them?
SNAP SNAP
Basically, I wanted to race Macau, so I went there and raced my brand of racin'.
Oh yeah. Um, no big deal.
And nobody stayed in front of me! Not for long anyway!
YAK
YAK
YAK
VEEEEEEEEEEN

Congra-
tulations,
Gunma...
Akagi (age 28) dominates at the 24th Meiseki Grand Prix!
BLOCK NEWS
Is Japanese! A historic feat!
Hi
there.
DING
DING
It's
him
again.
Wait...

It's that guy who's been following me day and night for the past six months.
Does this suit me?
Hm?
It sure does.
Wrap it up then.
TUNK
Thank you, sir.
Funny... You're not screaming.
GRIP

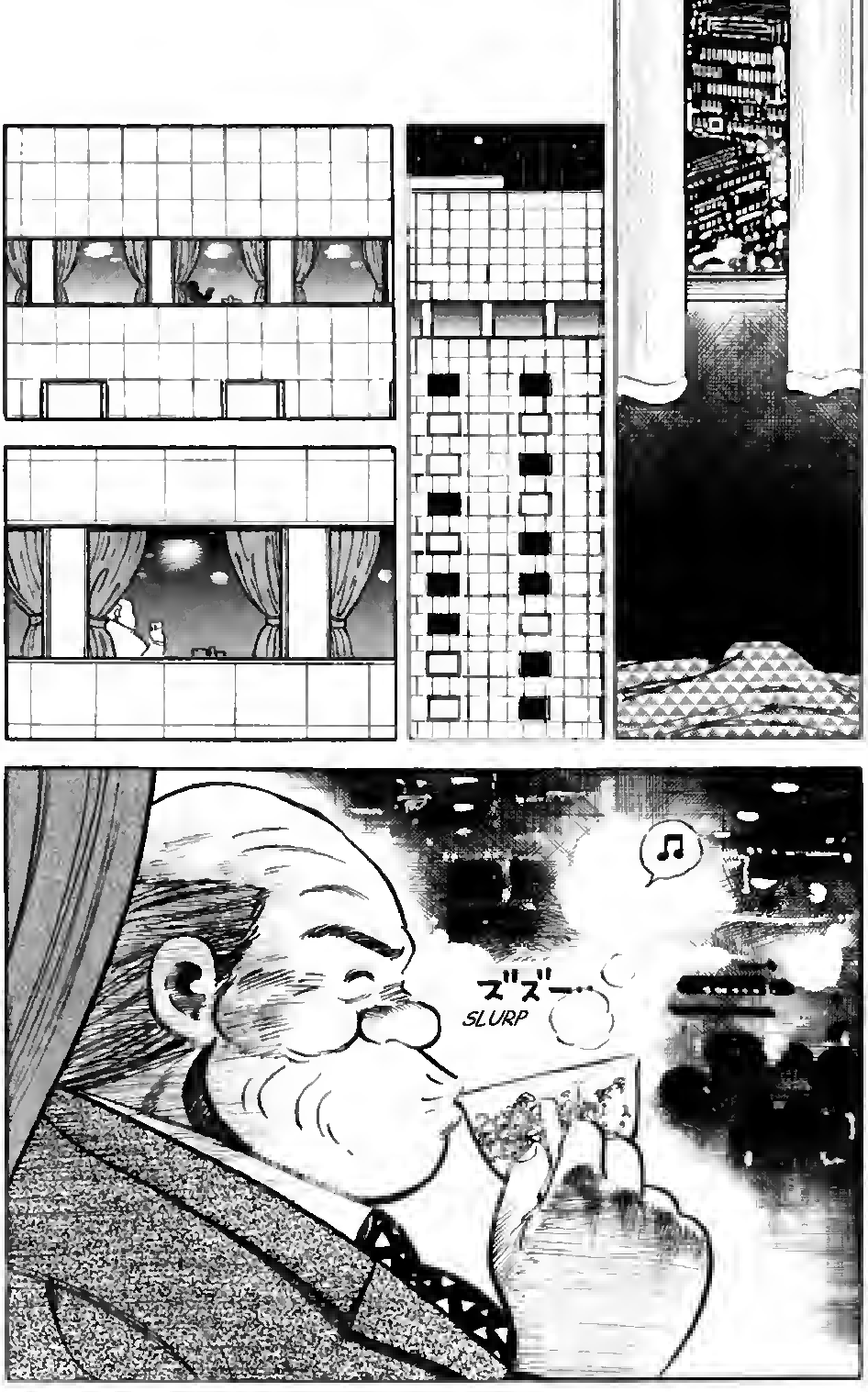
Your man has found another woman.
A woman with wrinkly palms can never be happy.
FWOOP
What a soft, precious little hand.
What are you doing?
But you've got a lot of lines on your palm.
Let go of me!
Sorry to be the bearer of bad news.
She's well to-do, from a great family.
And they'll soon be engaged.
Even worse...
!!
Engaged?
...
Try not to get thrown out like common dirt.
I feel sorry for you, girlie.

...

You're so bad. I thought we were just going out to dinner.

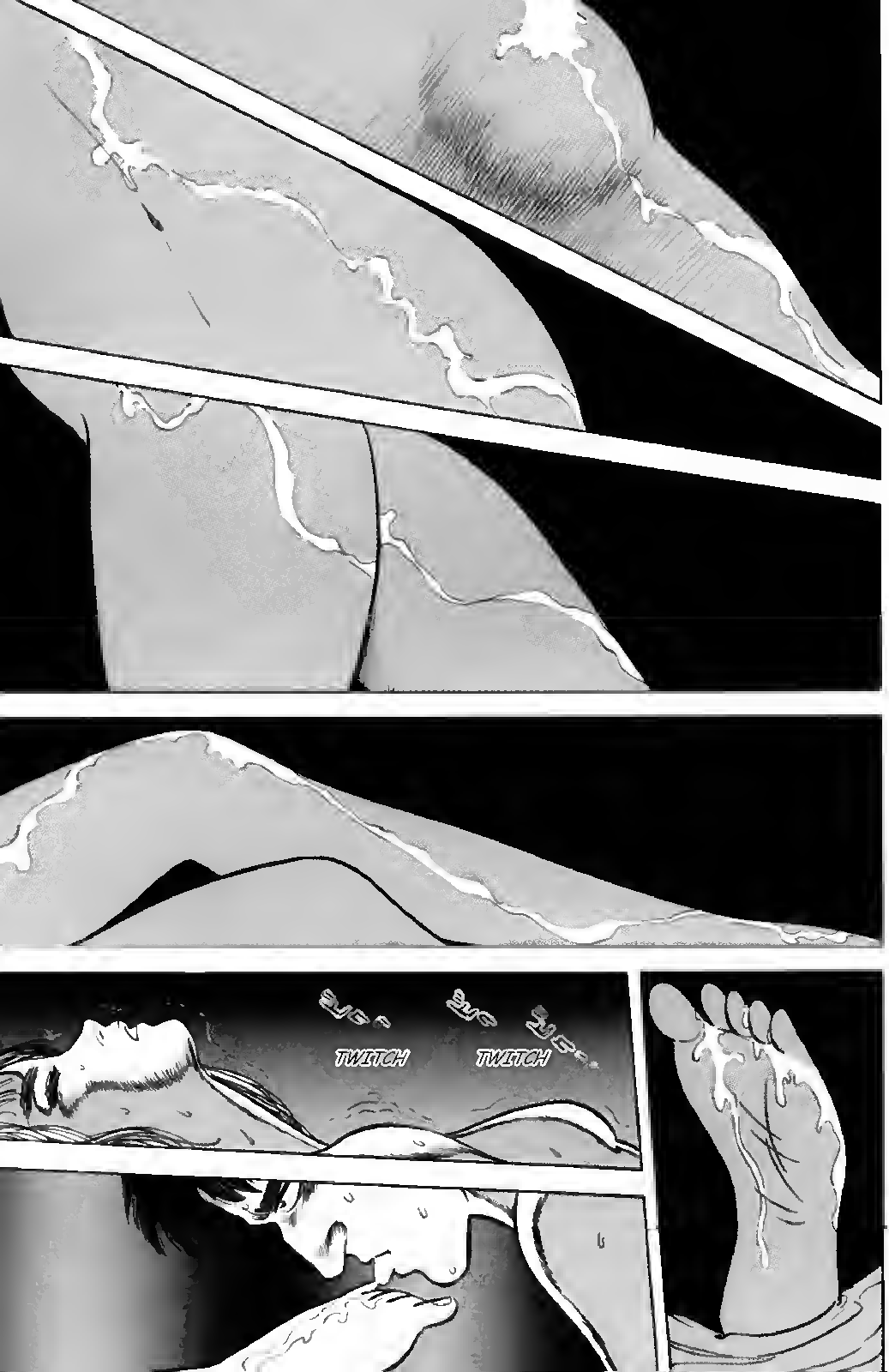
I want you to take control.

But who would want to do this, and for what?
I'm just being harassed.
Shoma has a woman?
No way.
Whatever...
Even if he really is getting engaged...
...I'll be fine.
Shoma could never dump me!
There's no way.
I mean, I'm the only woman he can even...


ズズー…
SLURP

Chapter 3:
Ringing in the Ears

Ahh...


TWITCH
TWITCH

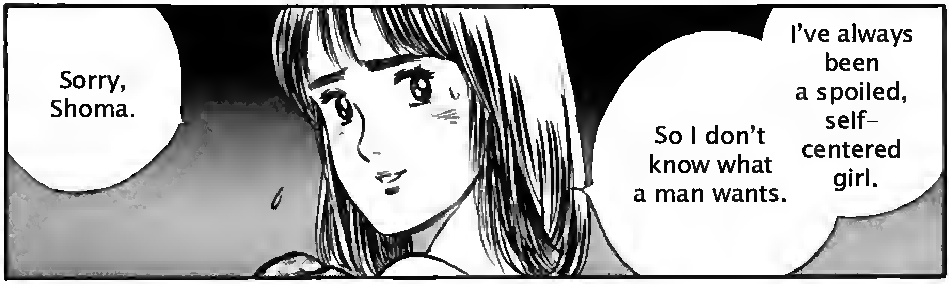
HUFF
Enough foreplay.
HUFF
...
Let's do it, Shoma.
HUFF
Uh...
That's odd.

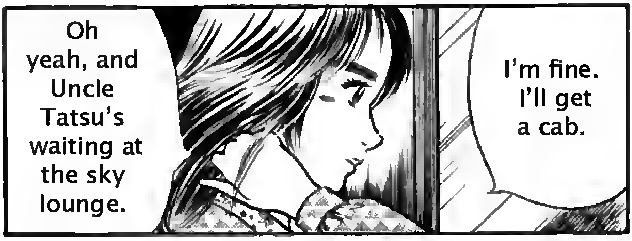
I'm madly in love with you.
What's wrong with it?
Gimme a little more time.
Not sure what's gotten in to me today.
Sorry...
Wow.
...

Ayako!

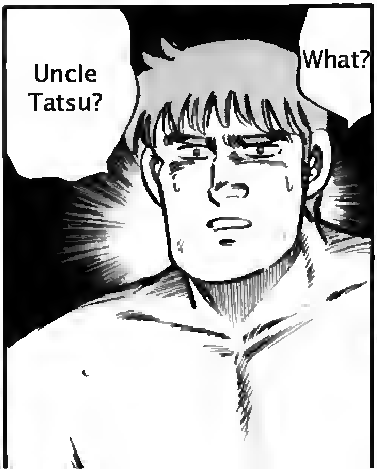
That's not it at all!
No!

If you love another woman, you could have just told me.


Sorry, Shoma.
So I don't know what a man wants.
I've always been a spoiled, self-centered girl.

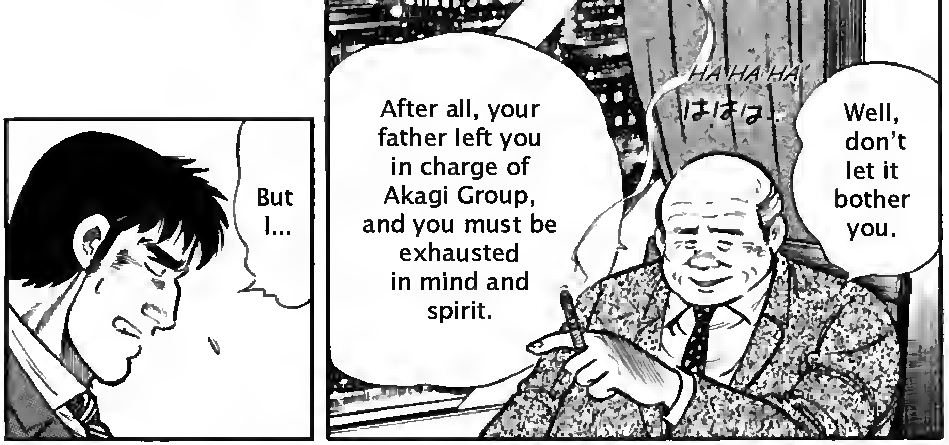

Oh yeah, and Uncle Tatsu's waiting at the sky lounge.
I'm fine. I'll get a cab.

I can't let you go back alone.
W... wait!
I'll take you home.

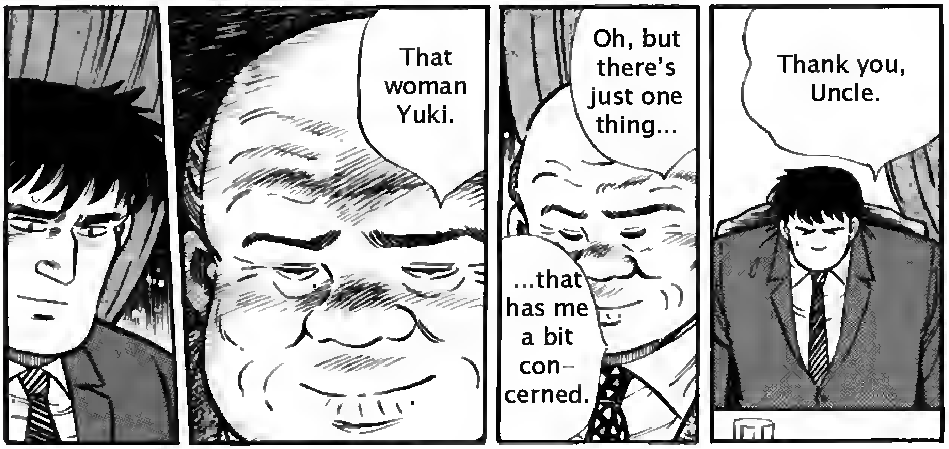

Uncle Tatsu?
What?

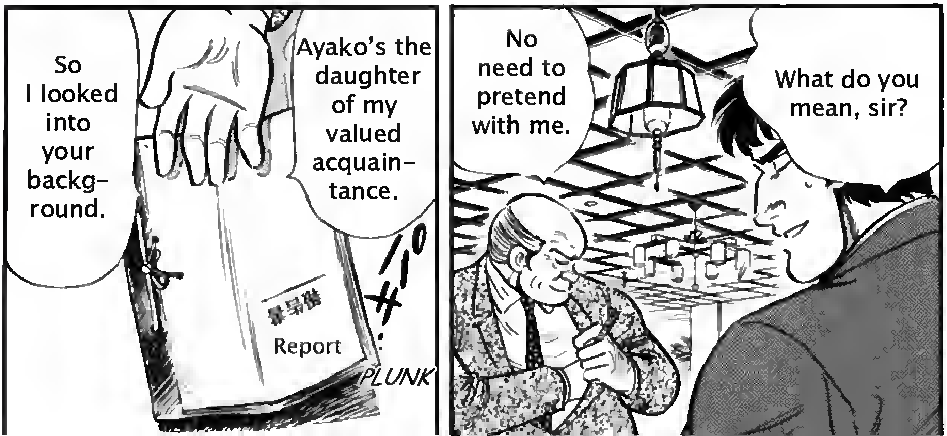
Well hello... Where's Ayako?
She took a cab home.
Hm?
How was she?
My apologies. I told Ayako I'd be here, but I thought you two were enjoying yourselves, so I was about to head back.
Wow, I had no idea you were coming.
What's with the long face? Don't tell me she wasn't your cup of tea.
H... How...
In fact, I love her from the bottom of my heart.
It's not like that.
The perfect girl for you!
I had a feeling about you two. She's from a great family, and a real looker.

...
So tell me...
Did you make her yours?
...
Right...
Which explains why she left early!
Hmm.
I see...
コッ
TAP
コッ
TAP

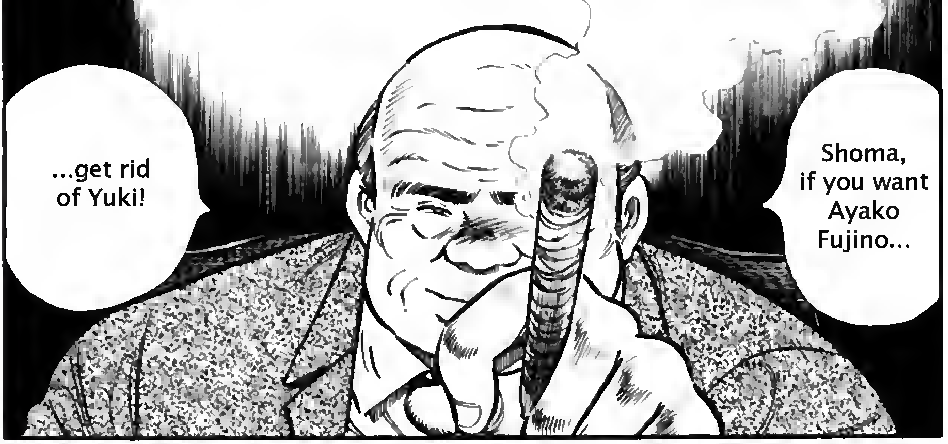

But I...
After all, your father left you in charge of Akagi Group, and you must be exhausted in mind and spirit.
HAHAHA
はは...
Well, don't let it bother you.

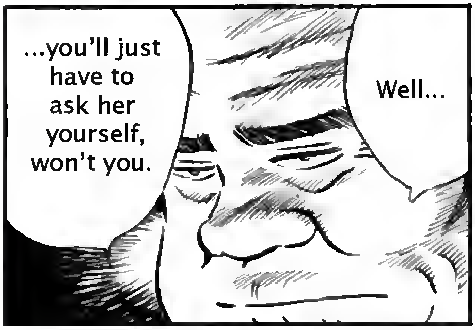
A little pouting was all that was.
She still doesn't understand what a man has to go through at work.
I'll give Ayako a good talk about that.


That woman Yuki.
Oh, but there's just one thing...
...that has me a bit concerned.
Thank you, Uncle.


So I looked into your background.
Ayako's the daughter of my valued acquaintance.
Report
PLUNK
No need to pretend with me.
What do you mean, sir?

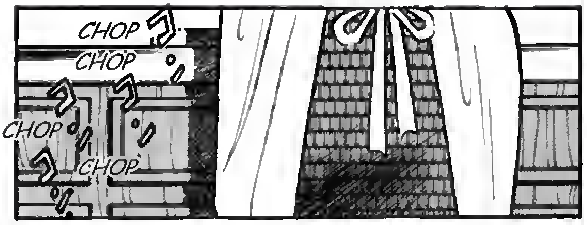
You're kidding me!
...!
Yuki...
According to this report, she's been appropriating an awful lot of money.
On paper she claims it's for store renovation funds, inventory, and the like.
But over 100 million yen is already unaccounted for.
You should cut off all ties with that woman.
...but even if you failed to catch 100 million yen in leaked funds, the Tax Office is sure to notice.
Report
I know it's been rough for you...
Be careful, Shoma.
How can this be...
...let's just say the results would be less than desirable for Akagi Group.
If this Yuki's existence and actions go public...

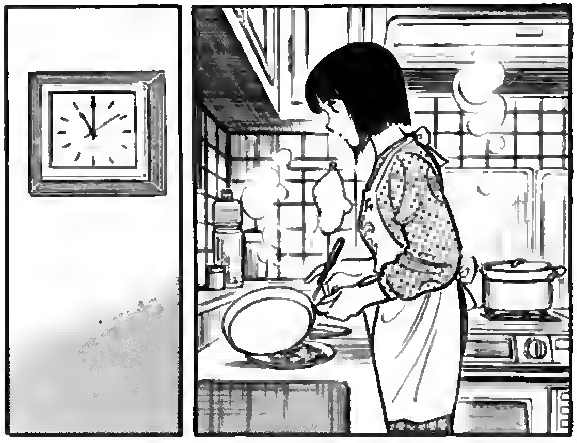

...get rid of Yuki!
Shoma, if you want Ayako Fujino...


...you'll just have to ask her yourself, won't you.
Well...

...what on earth did she use all that money for?
But...

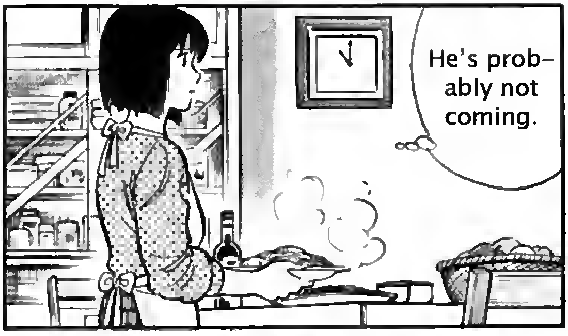
Yes, sir. I will.

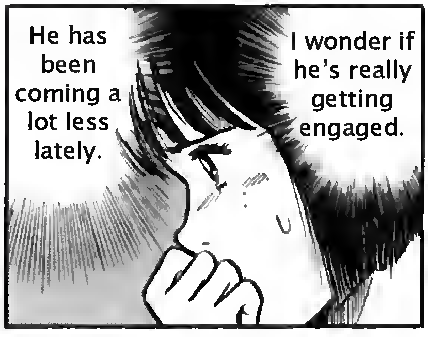

CHOP
CHOP
CHOP
CHOP

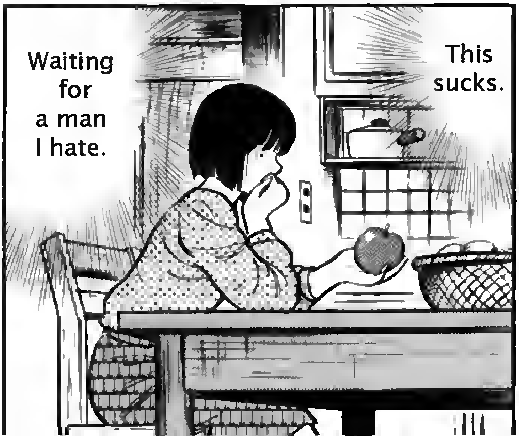


YOTSUYA PARK

Wow.
Sigh ...
PAFF


He's probably not coming.

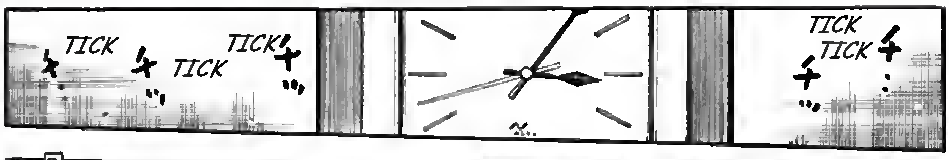

He has been coming a lot less lately.
I wonder if he's really getting engaged.


Waiting for a man I hate.
This sucks.

Co-
ming!
!
DING
DONG
ピンポーン
SLAM
Yes?
GRIP
Yuki...
I...
I made
dinner.
Had
a feeling you
might be
coming.
Did you
already
eat?
I wish you
would've
called.

Ah...
Ah...
Ahh...
Ah...
Uhn!

Why is Yuki the only one I can perform with?
THUNK
THUNK
That's enough, you jerk!
Aren't you done yet?
It was a lie then.
THUNK
Ow... Ow! Stop it!
THUNK
Ah...
Uh...
Oh...
That engagement story must be nonsense.
Uh...


TICK
TICK
TICK
TICK
TICK

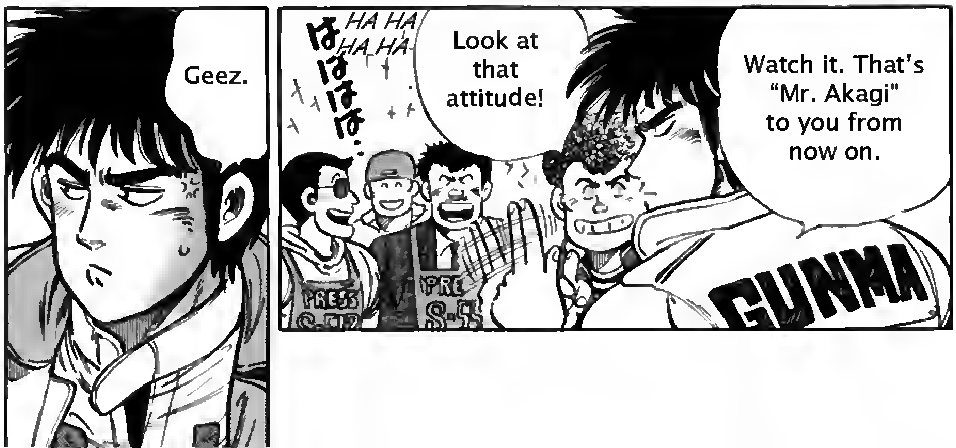
PFFT
You pitiful man. I'm the only one you can get it up with.

Shoma, if you want Ayako Fujino, get rid of Yuki...
If this Yuki's existence and actions go public...
Over 100 million yen is already unaccounted for.
What has she been using that money for!?
I'm gonna dump this chick.
It'll be fine. Everything 'll be fine.

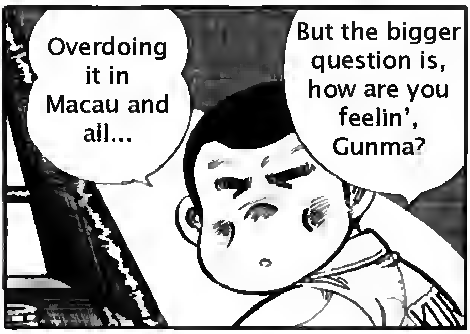
VOL.11

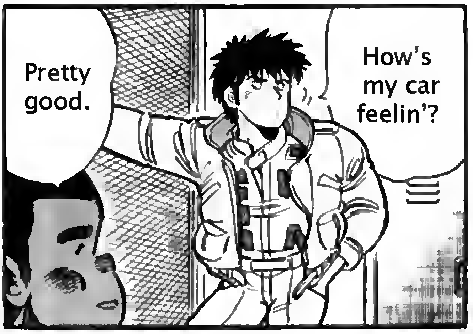
Chapter 4: Lucky Devil

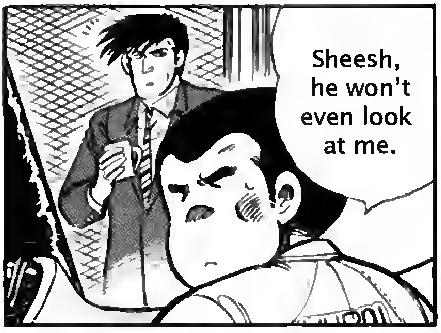
VROOOM
VRRRRR
Back at good old Suzuka again.
DENSO
POP
POP
POP
Would you shut up!?
Hey, congratu-lations on your win at Macau.
That was quite a feat, Gunma!
Man oh man, Japan is way colder than Macau!
What are you talking about? Macau was no different than Japan this year.
CAMEL


Geez.
HA HA HA HA
はははは
Look at that attitude!
Watch it. That's "Mr. Akagi" to you from now on.
PRESS
GUNMA

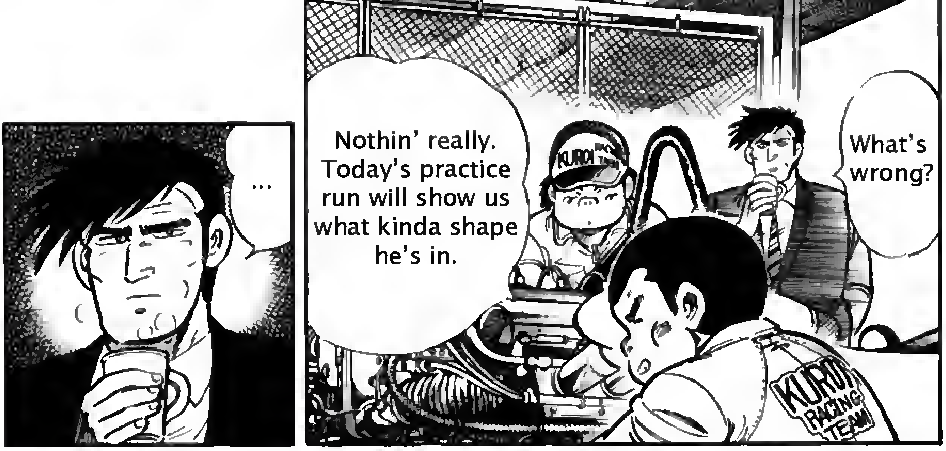
VRRR
'Sup Tamo-tsu?
VROO
TA TUNK
VRR VRR VRR
VOOOM
OM
SHOEI
NGK

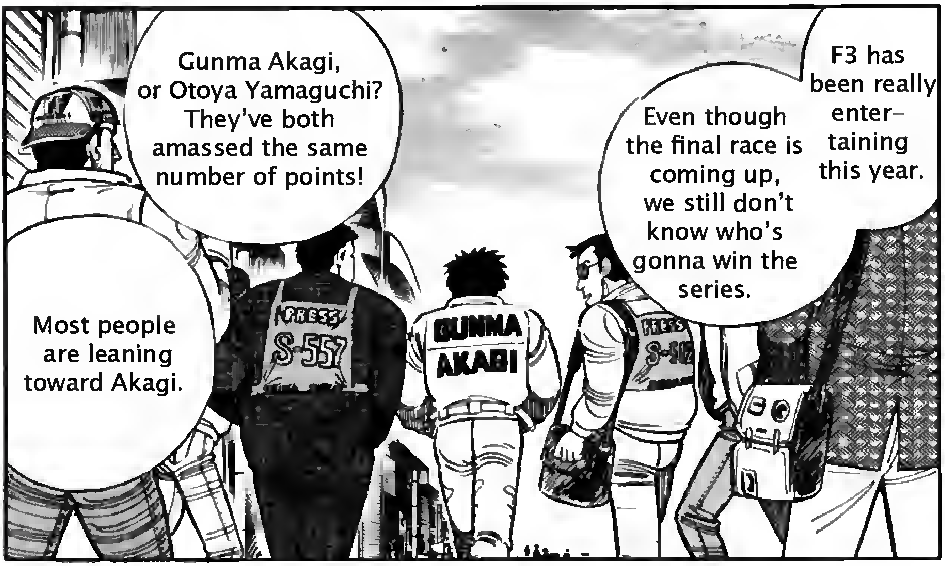

Overdoing it in Macau and all...
But the bigger question is, how are you feelin', Gunma?


Pretty good.
How's my car feelin'?


Sheesh, he won't even look at me.

Gun-ma...
Fame can wear a man out. Ha ha ha...
What is this, another interview? Lemme get a practice run in.


...
Nothin' really. Today's practice run will show us what kinda shape he's in.
What's wrong?
KUROI RACING TEAM


Gunma Akagi, or Otoya Yamaguchi? They've both amassed the same number of points!
Most people are leaning toward Akagi.
Even though the final race is coming up, we still don't know who's gonna win the series.
F3 has been really enter-taining this year.
PRESS
S-557
GUNMA
AKABI

Heh. Still talkin' about that, huh?
He is the first Japanese driver to win at Macau after all!

Actually, I totally know. I'm so gonna win. Heh heh heh!
But you never know till the rubber hits the road, right?

Don't play dumb with us. You must have plans, right? Moving up to F3000, things like that?
Next season?
What are your plans for next season?
Hm?
By the way...
Well, sure...
You dominated at Macau, after all! You must be getting all sorts of invitations, so tell us a little about that.
...
I'm sure you've been in talks for that sort of thing too, right Akagi?
Which guarantees him a spot in F3000, plus 100 to 200 million yen a year in sponsor funds.
...rumor has it that Otoya Yamaguchi just landed a big sponsor.

That way I can see how the car's doing.
Anyways, you need to be aggressive today, like it's an actual race.
KACHUK
Ain't Yamaguchi comin'?
I don't know. He should be.
GUNMA
KUROI
You got it.
Gun-ma...
VAROOM
How the car's doing, and how I'm doing, right?
VROOOOOH
POTENZA

Oh, Junko...
PAT
What happ-ened?
I gotta stop worrying so much.
So you noticed.
KUROI RACING TEAM
Well, he's always gonna do his best, in his own way.
Gunma doesn't care about what others think, and he's always so reckless.
I couldn't even watch most of the race at Macau.
Sigh... I understand how you feel. It's only natural to worry.
If he's gonna be so reckless all the time.
Pfft... He's impossible to keep up with.
...!?

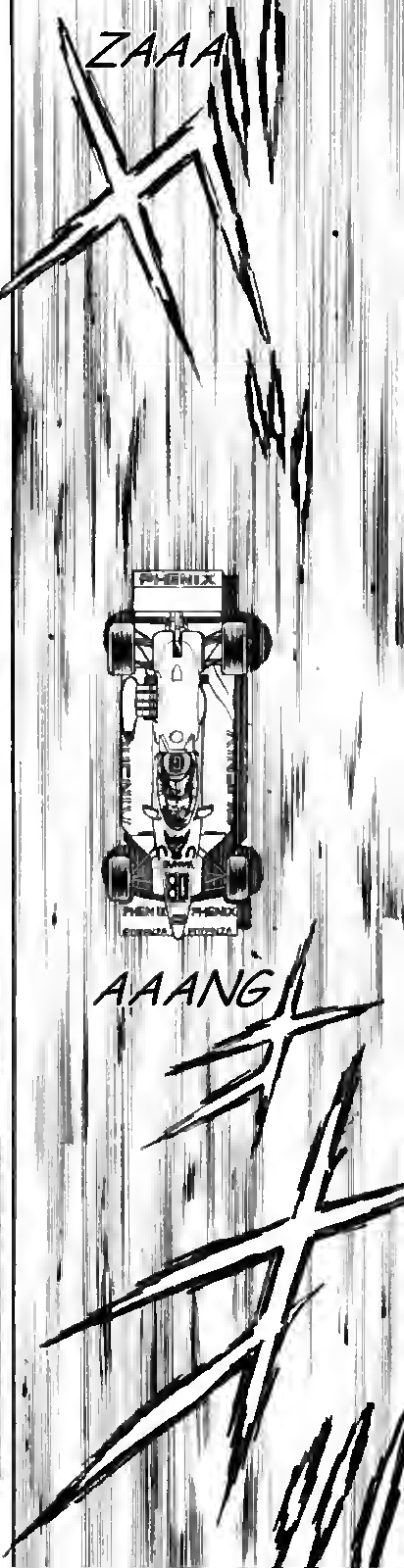
SHOOM
ZOOOM
GRIP
SHUNK
Yamaguchi gets a 100-million yen sponsor and he'll be drivin' in F3000 next season!?
100 million yen!?
GUN

ZAAAANG
What the hell is that!?
How'd he get so lucky?
And I get jack squat!?
Anyway, I'm basically the Picasso of racing compared to him!
...and my personality is... is much more...
...and better lookin'...
I'm two or three times faster than him...
There's no justice in this world!
Dammit!
VROOOM

How's he doing?
Not well. No speed at all, and times worth forgetting.

Must've overdid it in Macau.
He seems out of sorts.

Damn it all.
PHENIX
GUNMA

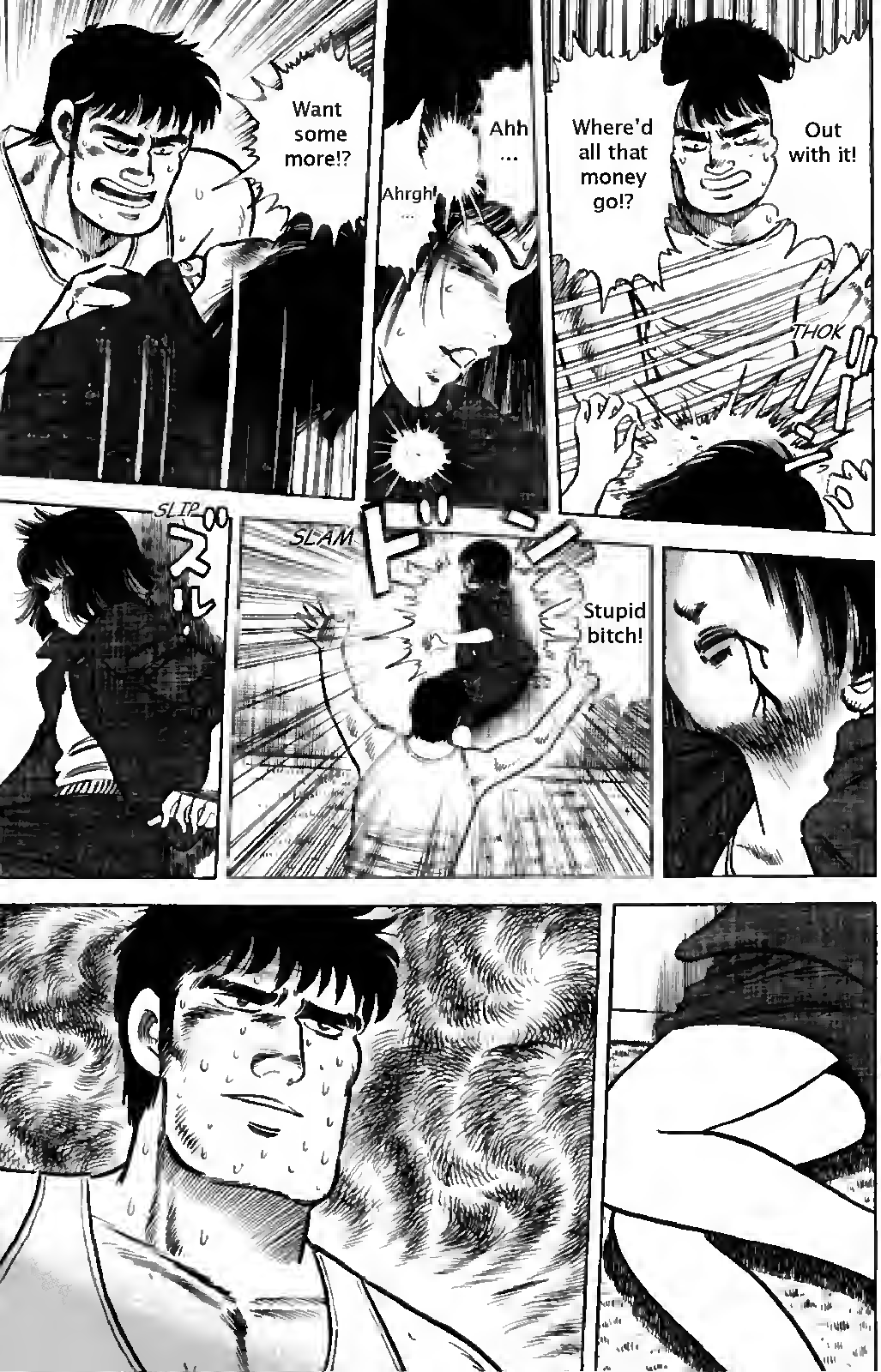

ZAAA
PHENIX
AAANG!

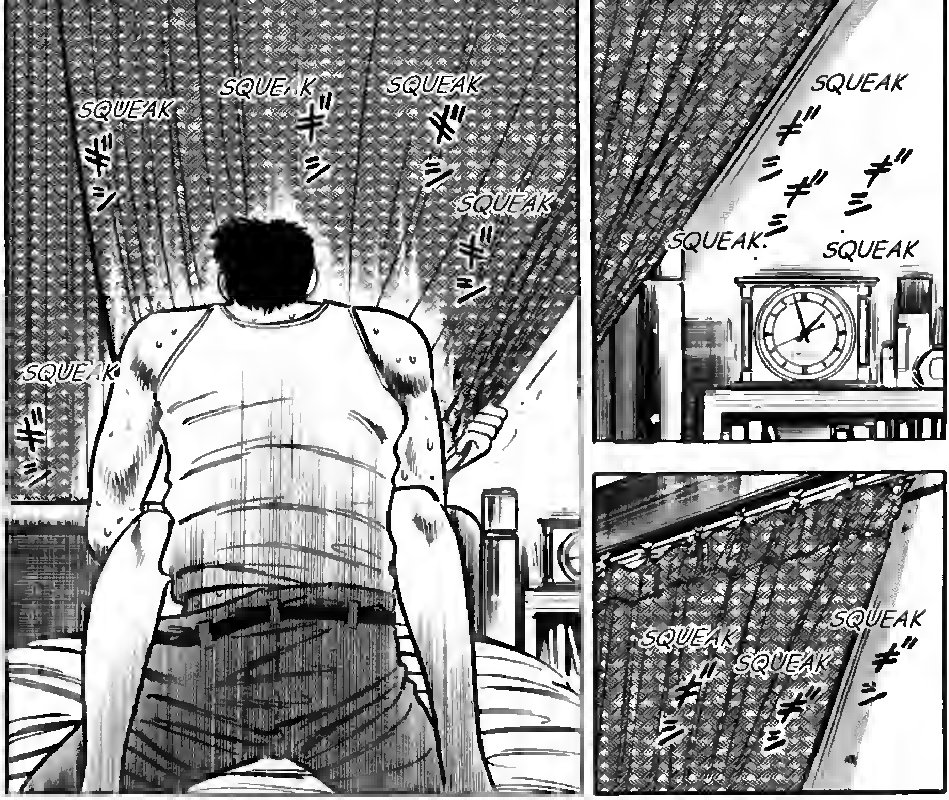
KACHUNK
カチャ
Wake up, Shoma.
I have to get to the shop now.
You're awake.
Oh...
YOTSUYA PARK
Yuki.
Breakfast is on the table, I'll see ya later.
Report
We need to talk.
Stay home today.

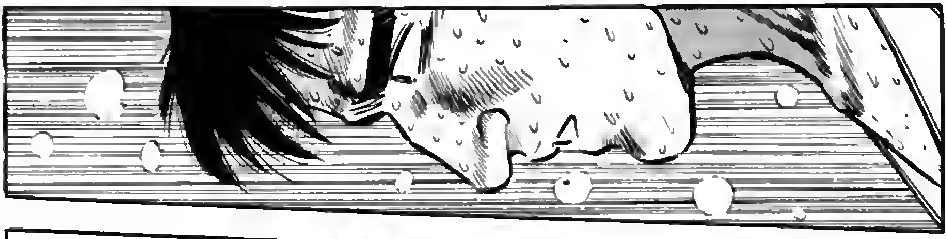
I'm shocked at how much money you spent.
...
So you checked then...
That was pretty low of you.
Hold on. Low of me?
What you're doing is embezzlement. That's a crime.
And what about what you've done?
You took my life from me! Isn't that a crime!?
Don't pretend to be innocent in all this.
I need to know where all that money went.
What did you blow 100 million yen on?
I don't have to tell you.
Besides, I can't even remember.
You'll tell me.
STARE

Hold on!
This is stupid. I'm going to the shop.
Then start remembering!
I told you I forgot!
...!
I'm not letting you leave until you talk!
SLAM
Idiot!
You'll tell me, even if I have to beat it out of you.

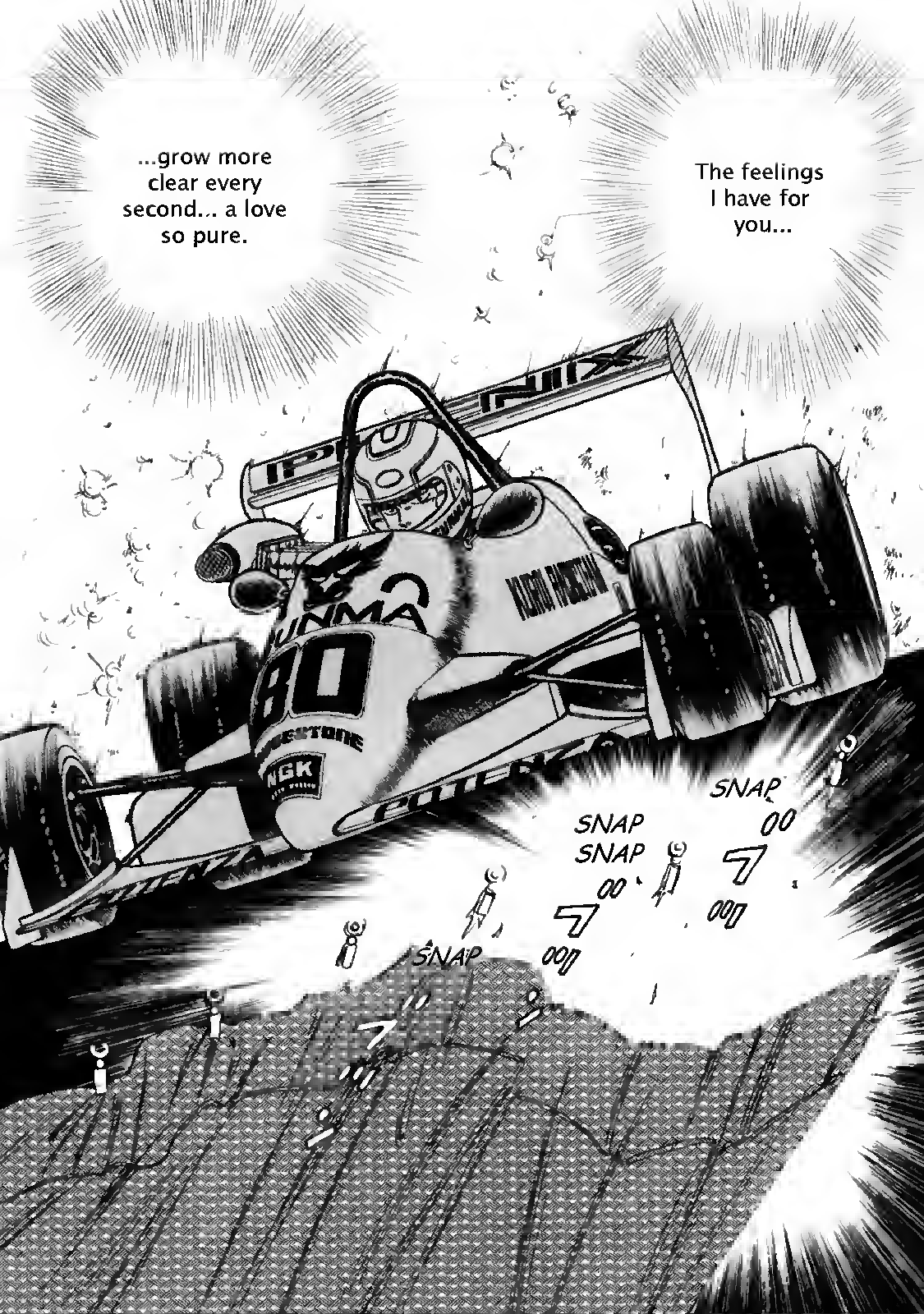
Don't screw around with me.
I'm warning you.
Yuki...
SMACK
PLIP
DRIP
GRIP


Want some more!?
Ahrgh!
Ahh ...
Where'd all that money go!?
Out with it!
THOK
SLIP
SLAM
Stupid bitch!


SQUEAK
SQUEAK
SQUEAK
SQUEAK
SQUEAK
SQUEAK
SQUEAK
SQUEAK
SQUEAK
SQUEAK
SQUEAK



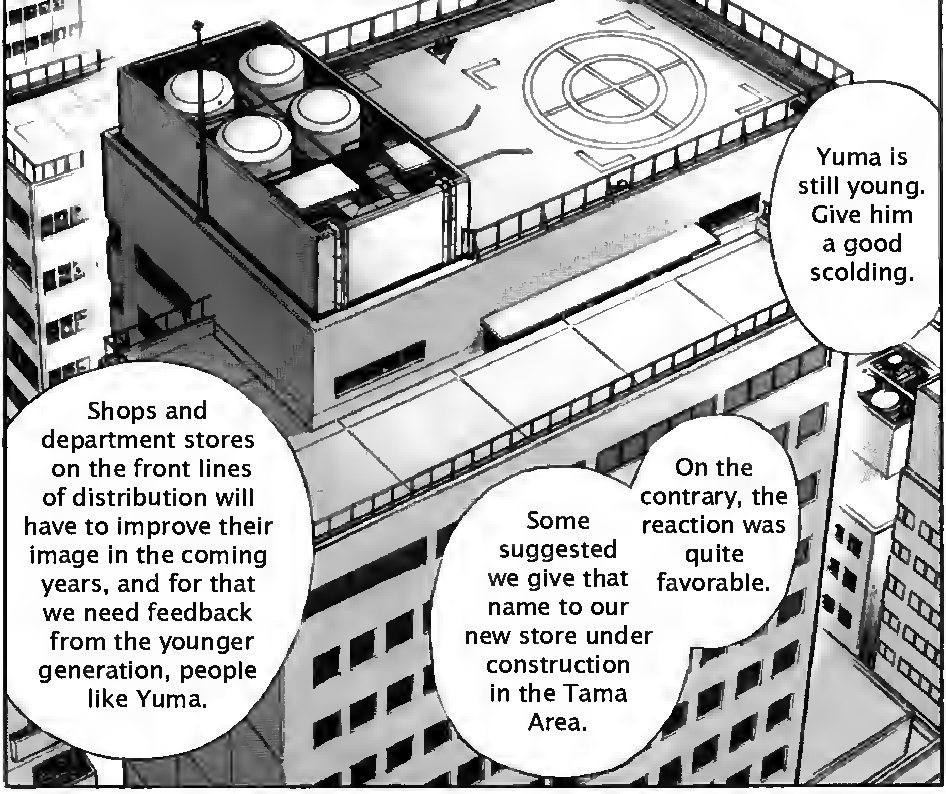
Gunma...
The more you make me suffer, and the deeper I sink into hell...
SQUEAK
SQUEAK
Slap me around and have your way with me.
That's right.


...grow more clear every second... a love so pure.
The feelings I have for you...
NISSAN
YUMA
80
BRIDGESTONE
NGK
SNAP
SNAP
SNAP
SNAP

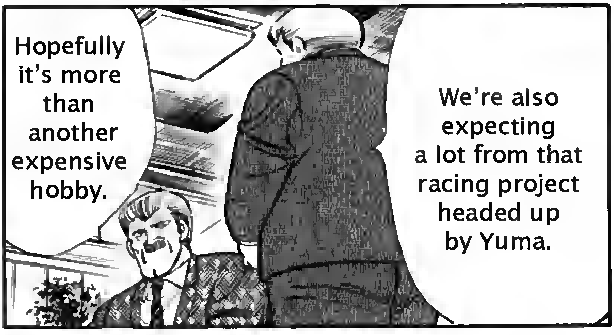
VOL. 11

Chapter 5:
The Wind of Fortune

– Akagi Head Office –
That was quite a beneficial trip.
Is this about Yuma?
He attended our executive board meeting...
...and surprised everyone with his announcement.
He wants to change the name "Akagi Distribution Group" to something else.
Apparently it means "transformation."
Suggesting "Metamorphose" as an alternative.


Yuma is still young. Give him a good scolding.
Shops and department stores on the front lines of distribution will have to improve their image in the coming years, and for that we need feedback from the younger generation, people like Yuma.
On the contrary, the reaction was quite favorable.
Some suggested we give that name to our new store under construction in the Tama Area.

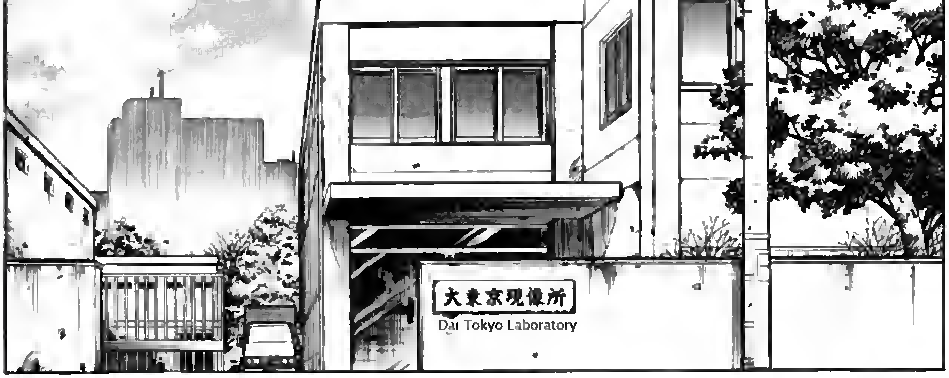
Tran-forma-tion, huh ...


Hopefully it's more than another expensive hobby.
We're also expecting a lot from that racing project headed up by Yuma.

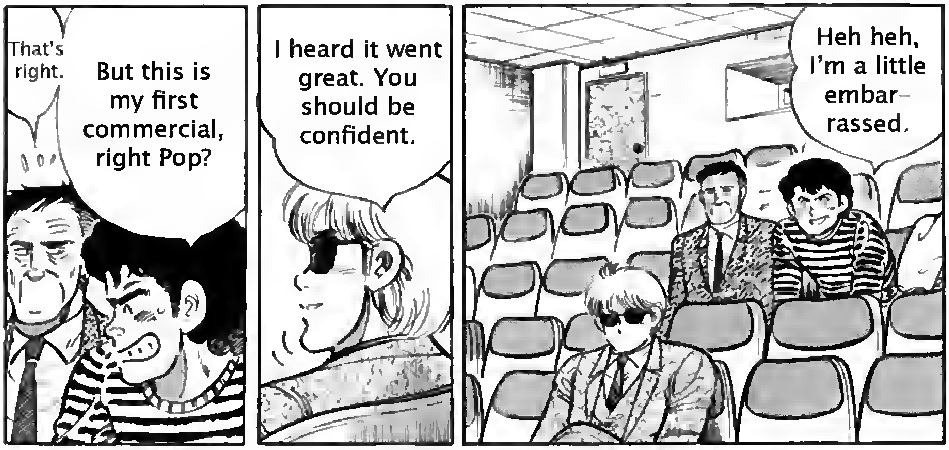
Uncle Tatsu?
TWITCH

It's about Tagawa.
However, I do have one concern.

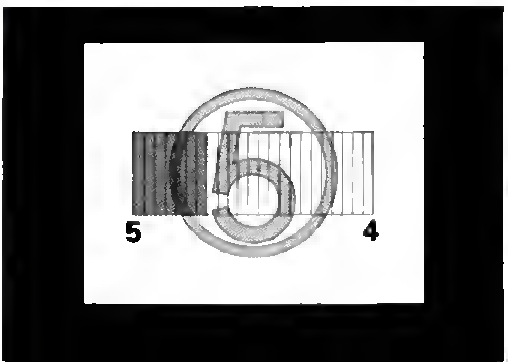
Shoma!
We suspect they're aiming for Akagi Land Development.
...but it seems that he and Fujino have something up their sleeve.
What!?
I don't know for sure...
So if anything happens to Shoma, I'll feel responsible.
I'm the one who took Tagawa Zinc from him, and chased him out of Akagi Group.
Yes.
But there's no denying his hatred for us.
You shouldn't feel resposible, Kasai.
Uncle Tatsu left Akagi Group on his own.
What a nuisance.
Uncle Tatsu, huh...


大東京現像所
Dai Tokyo Laboratory

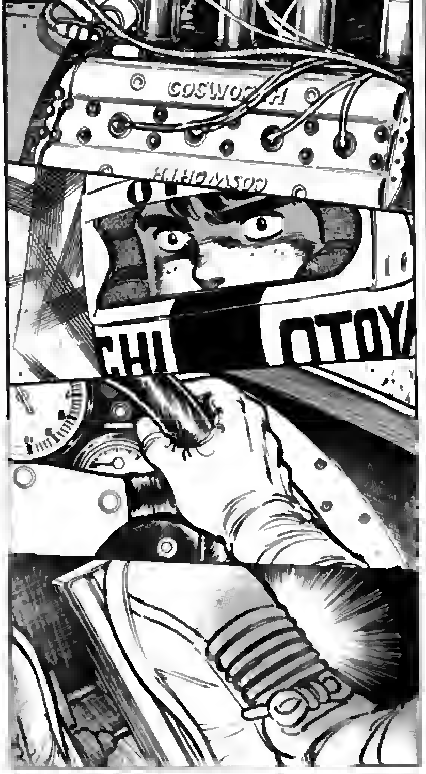
試写室
Screening Room

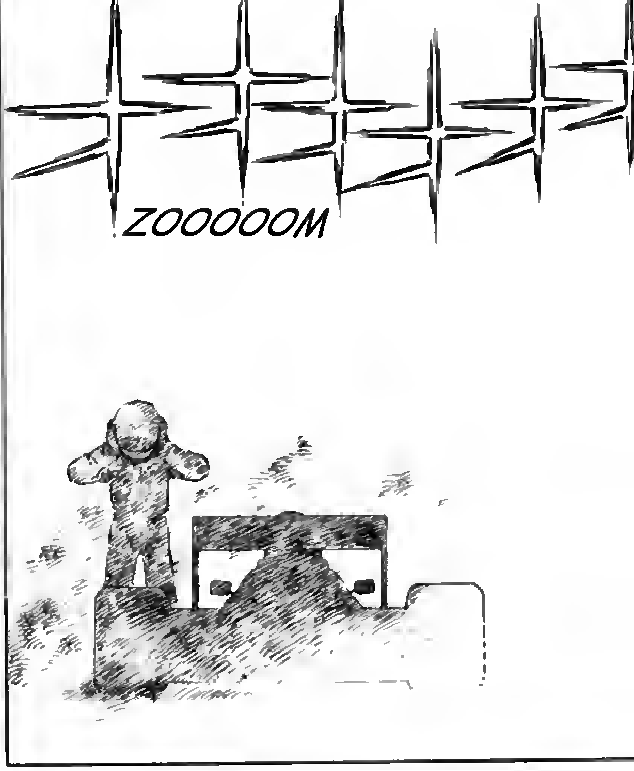

That's right.
But this is my first commercial, right Pop?
I heard it went great. You should be confident.
Heh heh, I'm a little embar-rassed.

Start it up.

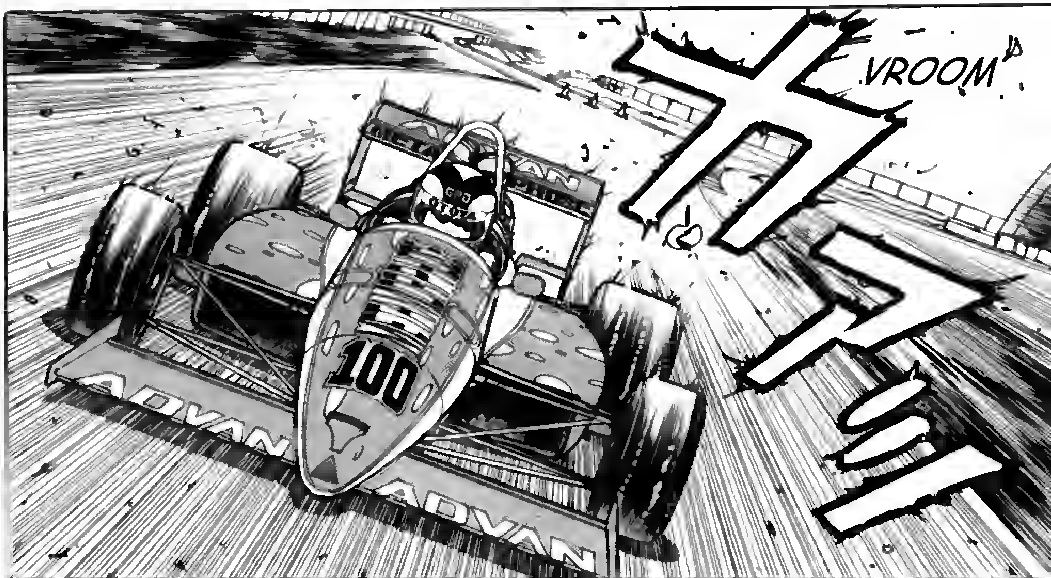

5
5
4

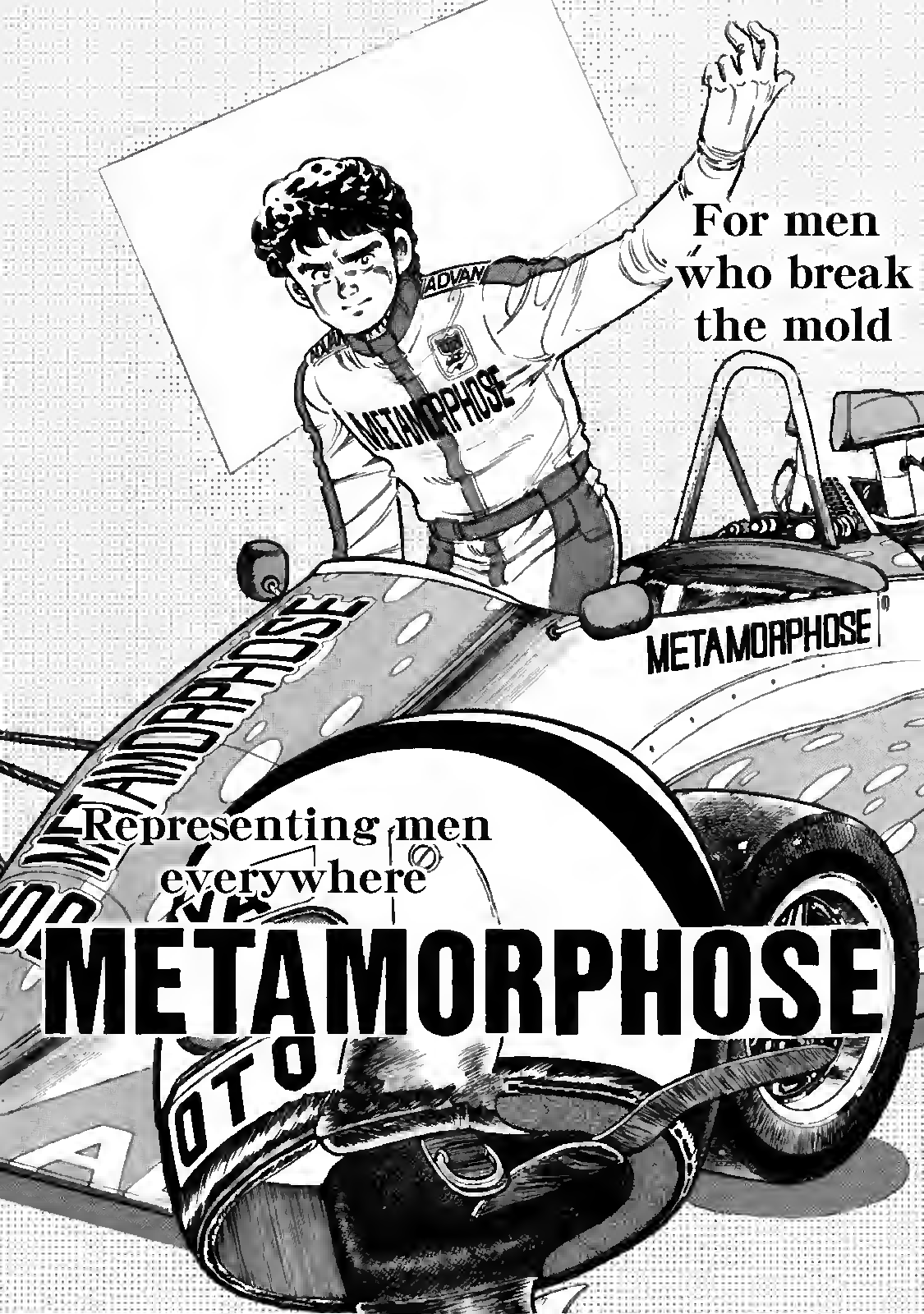
GULP

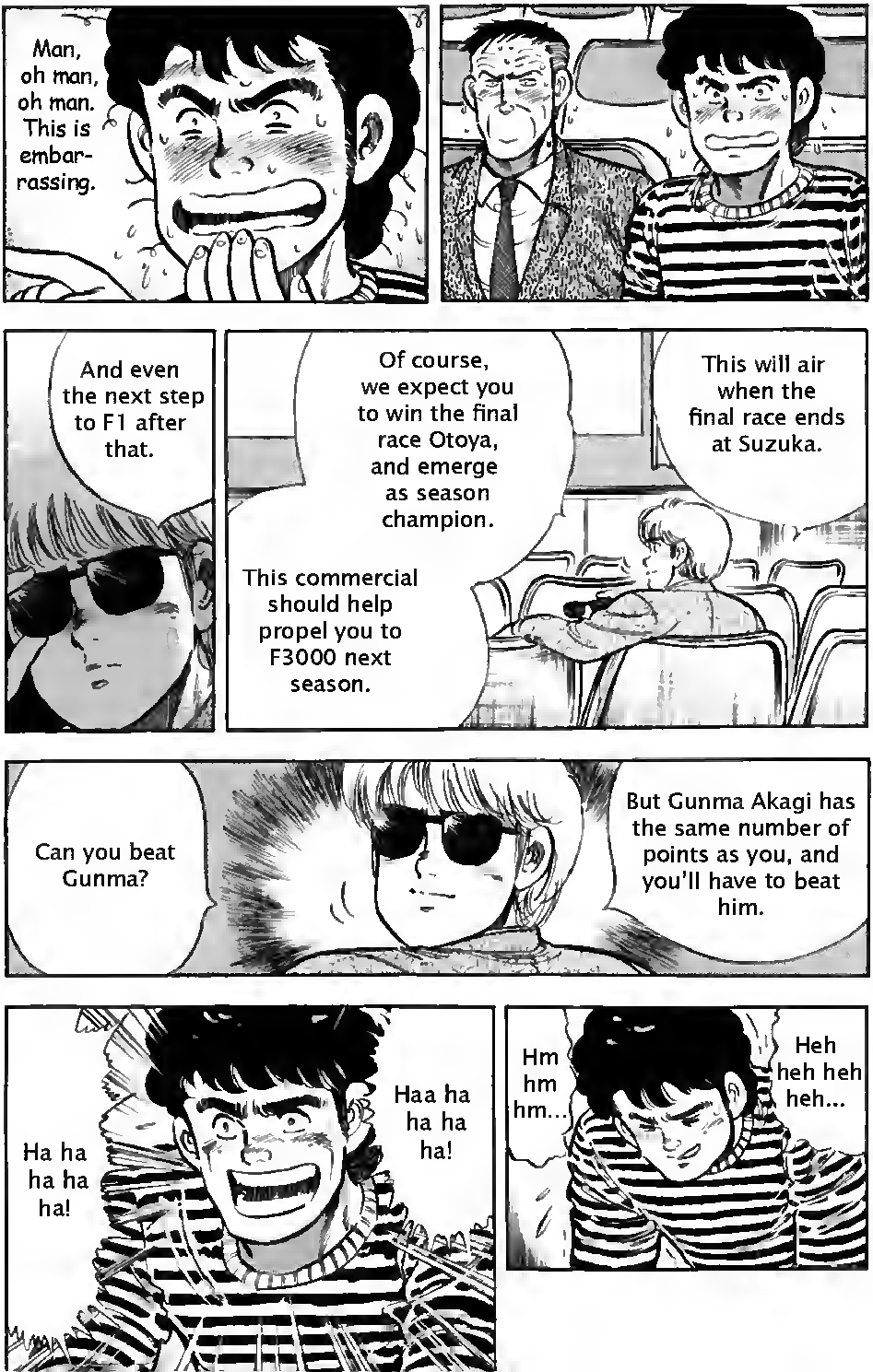

COSWORTH
TOYO


ZOOOOOM

Time races on


VROOM
100
ADVAN


For men
who break
the mold
METAMORPHOSE
METAMORPHOSE
METAMORPHOSE
Representing men
everywhere
METAMORPHOSE


Man, oh man, oh man. This is embar-rassing.
And even the next step to F1 after that.
Of course, we expect you to win the final race Otoya, and emerge as season champion.
This will air when the final race ends at Suzuka.
This commercial should help propel you to F3000 next season.
Can you beat Gunma?
But Gunma Akagi has the same number of points as you, and you'll have to beat him.
Ha ha ha ha ha!
Haa ha ha ha ha!
Hm hm hm...
Heh heh heh heh...

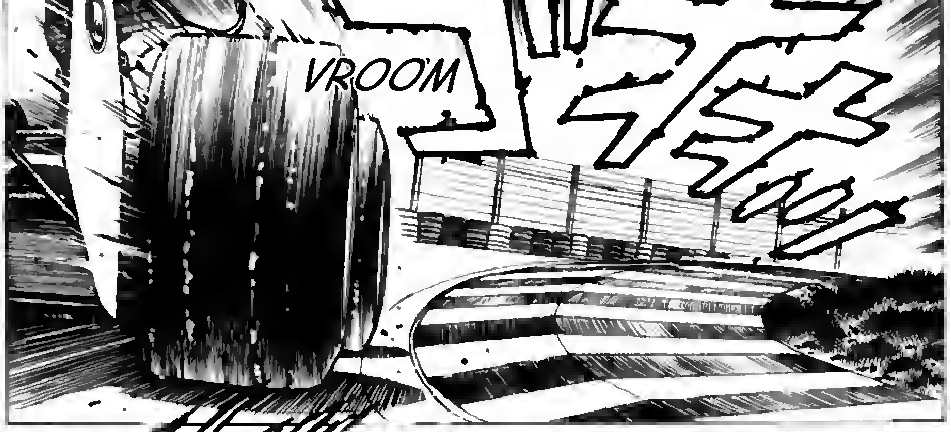
I mean, such a huge corporation is gonna sponsor me, with no strings attached? That's a regular fairy tale.
You know ...
...when I suddenly got that phone call from you in Macau, I thought it was some kinda joke.
Answer him, Otoya.
Hm hm hm... Sorry, I couldn't help it.
Shoot, the man in that movie is none other than yours truly, no denyin' that.
But you brought that contract with you, and now we've got this film.
Even when I met up with you at the airport and we talked, I still couldn't believe it. I mean, who would? Heh heh heh...
"Otoya, think you can beat Gunma and become series champion?" I couldn't help it.
Then you ask me the question.
So how about it, Otoya? Can you win?
After this I'll believe in anything! Including my incredible streak of good luck!
はっはっはっ
Ha ha ha ha!
I'm suspicious by nature, but at this point, I got no choice but to believe it's happening.

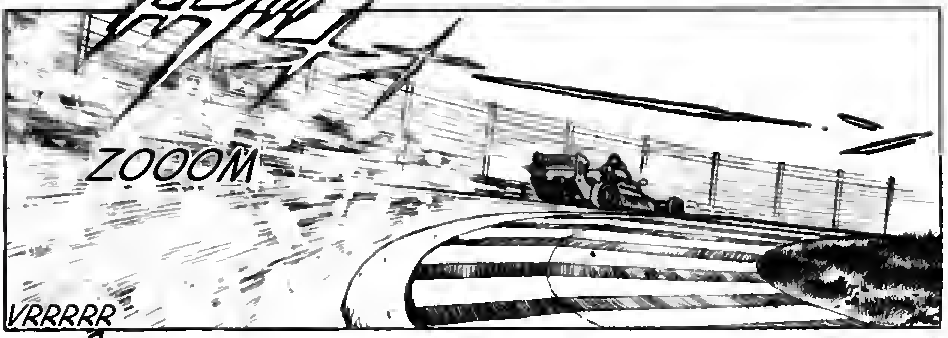
I don't know.
...
Piece o' cake!
Hell yes.
...is because you're inferior to Gunma.
Don't get too cocky. The reason I chose you...
Not even once!
GRIN
But he's never beat me!
Of course it will!
You think that'll continue?
Didn't I just tell you? I got plenty of faith in myself!
You're really sure of yourself, huh? Do you have the luck it takes?
CLOP
And that's something he ain't got!
Racing is unpredictable, and skill alone ain't enough. It also takes a dose of good luck to win.
THUNK

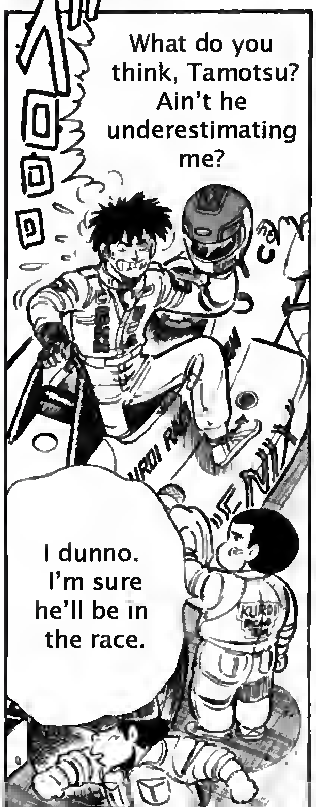
That right there proves how lucky I am.
And you chose me.
I heard you're Gunma's half brother.
Instead of him, you chose me.
...you must have a bunch of reasons for choosing me...
And another thing...
That's what really sucked you in
...but that don't mean squat. It's all about my lucky vibe.

I'm counting on you, Otoya!
You're insufferable.
But as a racer, you've got a lot of potential.
GRIN
TUNK

Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha...
Hm hm hm hm... Ha ha...


VROOM

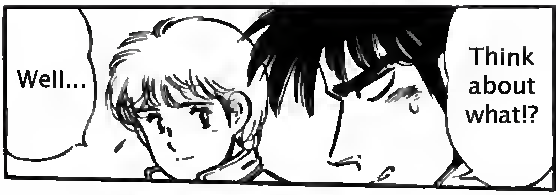

ZOOOM
VRRRRR


What do you think, Tamotsu? Ain't he underestimating me?
I dunno. I'm sure he'll be in the race.

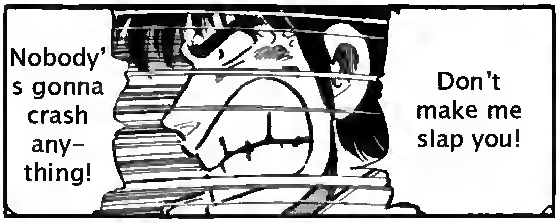
BROOOOH
Otoya ain't takin' me seriously.
He's gonna jump into the preliminary race without any practice?
SUZUKA CIRCU

What is that all about?
Not sure.
He's still feeling uneasy about Yuma and Otoya's meeting at the airport.
He seems pretty edgy today.
If he ain't here today, that means he's just gonna jump into tomorrow's race, sink or swim!
I'm a star, and he won't take me seriously.
F3000, huh...
THUMP
PLUNK
Stu-pid.
What's wrong?
Does he want me back in F3 next season? He ain't said squat to me about F3000.
How is Kuroi gonna handle this?

Hm? What is it?
Junko... Do you think I'm...
I mean...
...
You got a great time, so what's with the long face?
No- thing.
Pfff!
Would it screw up their corporate image?
Does my face scare away sponsors?
I just didn't expect you to care about something like that.
Oh right... I'm sorry.
I'm bein' serous here!
Don't you dare laugh!
...
I don't really care!

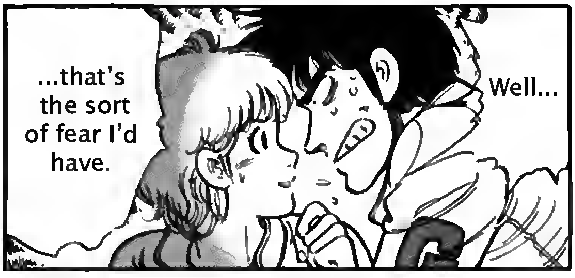

Well...
Think about what!?

If you crash it, smash it up, and burn it to a crisp...
I wouldn't want to see my company's name on a car wreck.

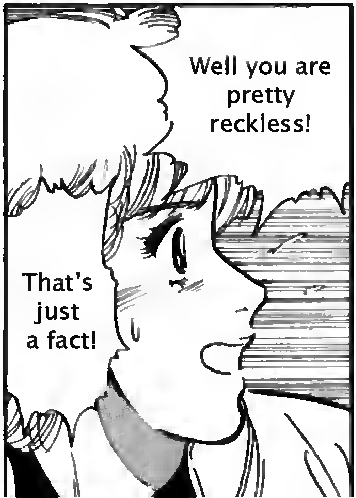

Nobody's gonna crash any-thing!
Don't make me slap you!

You know...
...if I was a sponsor.
Yeah.
I'd have to think about it a little!

So you think I'd get in a wreck?


...that's the sort of fear I'd have.
Well...

...and you smashed a lot of cars on your way to the top.
You were wrapped up like a mummy in the Macau race...

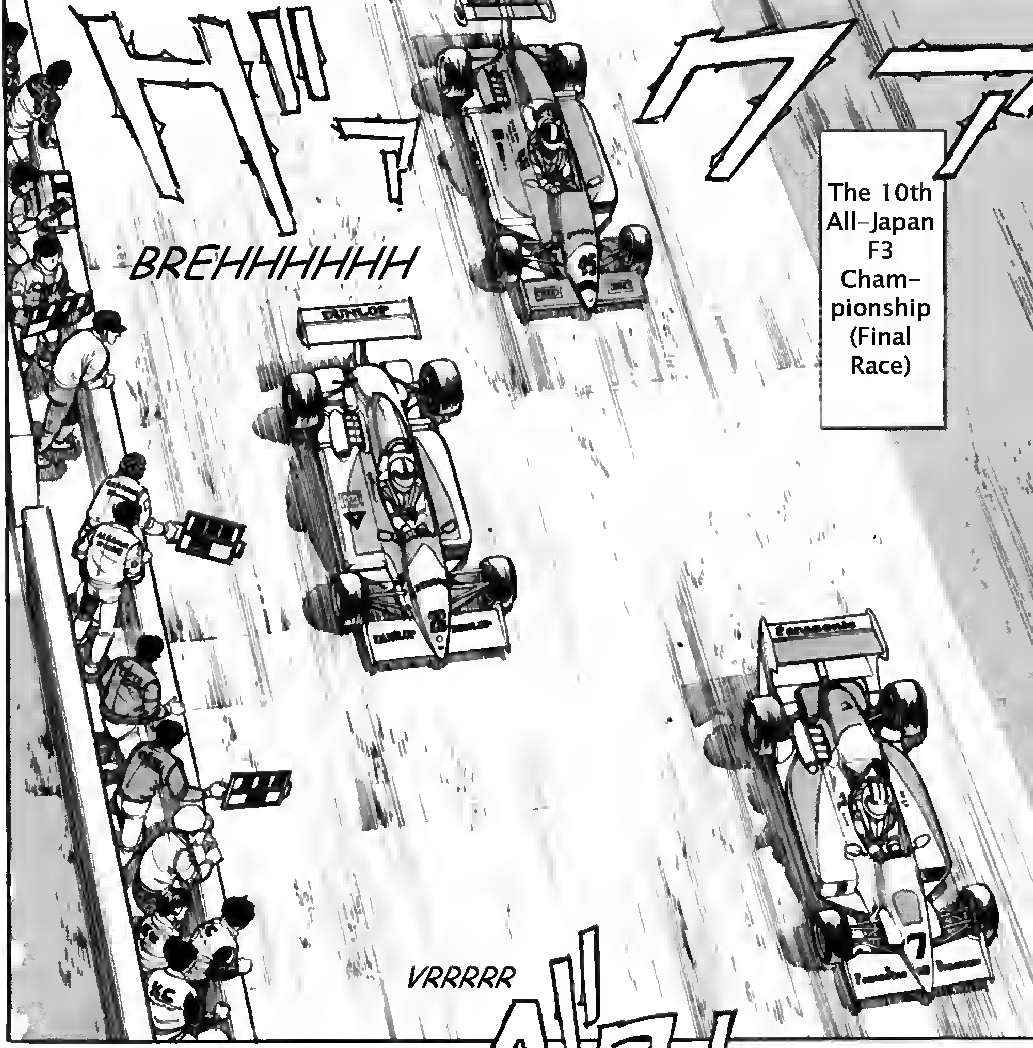

Well you are pretty reckless!
That's just a fact!

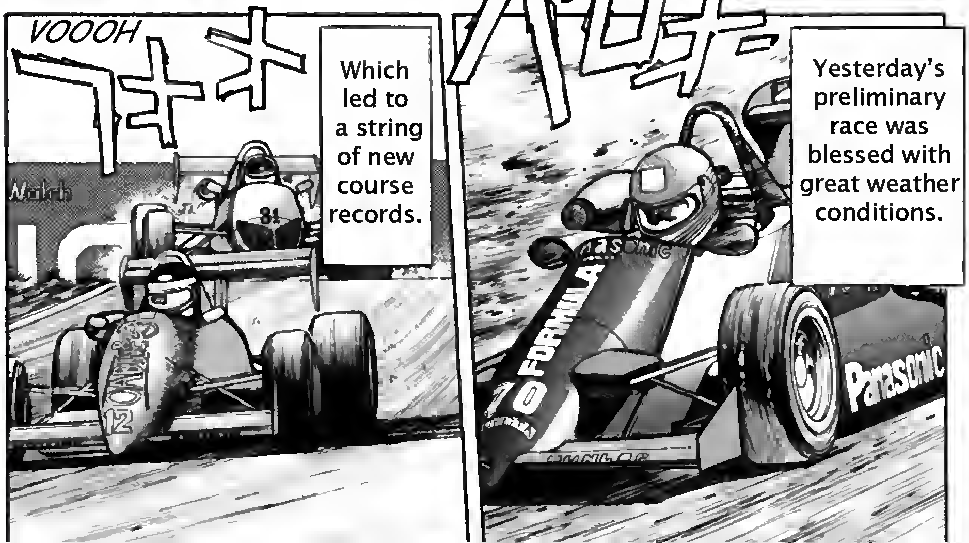
Tsh. So that's how it is.
THUMP
It's too dangerous for me to watch.
I mean really...
Wait.
I dunno, it's just...
As a woman.
SWIFF
Yes, that's how I feel.
?
As a woman?
SWOOF

F
VOL.11

Chapter 6:

Trail of Futility


BREHHHHHH
The 10th All-Japan F3 Championship (Final Race)
VRRRRR


VOOOH
Which led to a string of new course records.
Yesterday's preliminary race was blessed with great weather conditions.
Panasonic

CHATTER

CHATTER

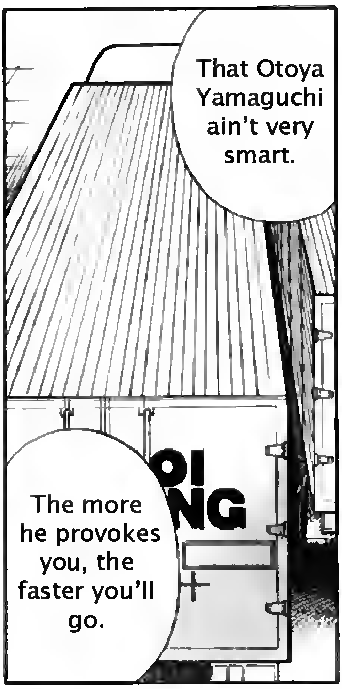
Preliminary Results

Rank	Driver	Time
1	Gunma Akagi	2'05"684
2	Otoya Yamaguchi	2'06"074
3	Koji Udo	2'06"089
4	R. Chipper	2'06"176
5	B. Scotte	2'06"348
6	[illegible]	2'06"364
7	Shuichi Hyodo	2'06"709
8	M. Sandler	2'06"776
9	Hitoshi Ogawa	2'06"793
10	Masayuki Honmo	2'06"843
11	H. Wallace	2'06"928
12	Osamu Shimojima	2'08"729
13	Masahiko Yoshida	2'09"253
14	Hiroshi Abe	2'09"470
15	Eiji Hagiwara	2'09"521
16	Wataru Fukunaga	2'09"568
17	Takashi Tazaki	2'09"748
18	Tsutomu Nakamura	2'09"961
19	Keizo Kirihara	2'13"941
20	Katsumi Nishino	2'14"133

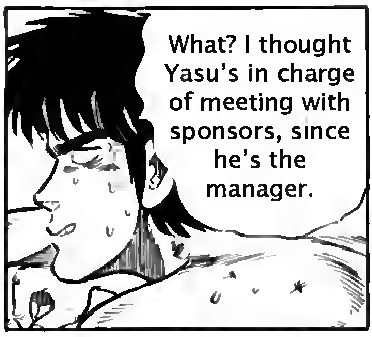
You're really something, Otoya.
Skipping practice and still managing to get second in the preliminary, and a course record!
Since you're fighting Gunma Akagi for the championship, and he won the poleposition, this should get very interesting today!
Think you can win?
I let Akagi win the pole position, just to make things more interesting!
Heh heh heh. You want the truth?
Gotta keep the fans happy, right?
FLASH
HA HA HA
What!?

VROOOOOH
Otoya really shoots off his mouth a lot.
Inte-resting.
Oh yeah?
Pretty Lcocky
Says he gave up to the pole to you on purpose!
HMPH!
Gun-ma!
WOBBLE
Let's go wish him some luck.
I'll give you a massage!
Take off the racing suit.

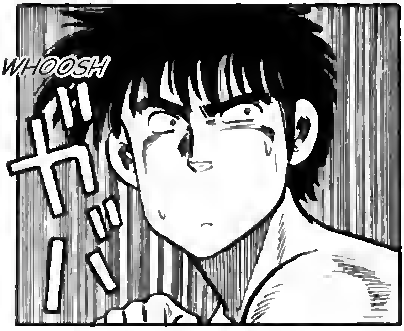
Right, Gunma?
Like he's digging his own grave.

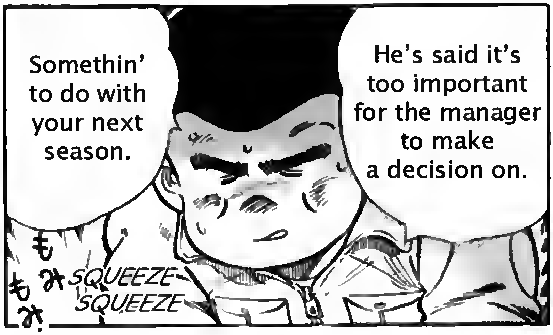

That Otoya Yamaguchi ain't very smart.
The more he provokes you, the faster you'll go.

I ain't seen him around!
Where's Kuroi?

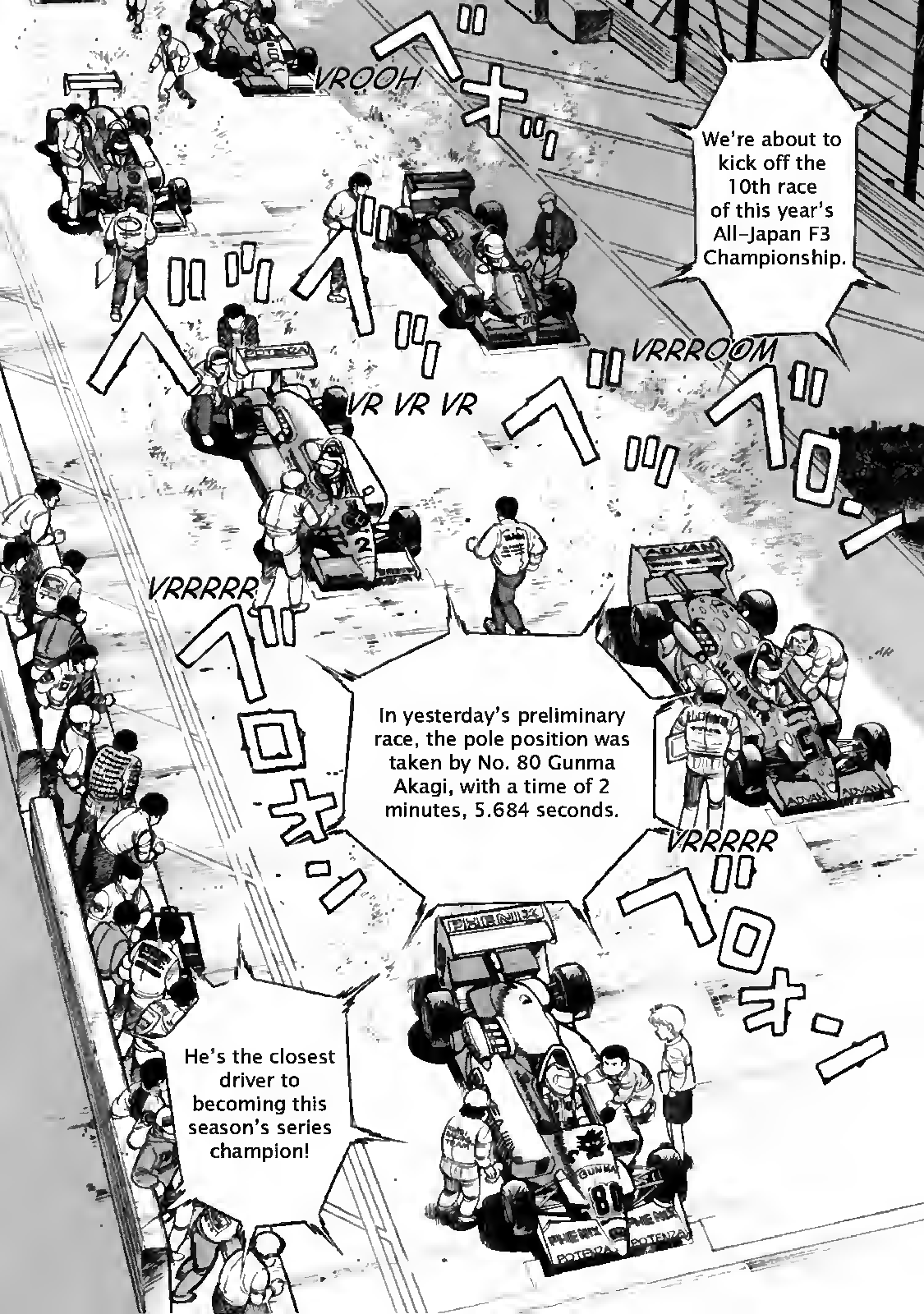

What? I thought Yasu's in charge of meeting with sponsors, since he's the manager.

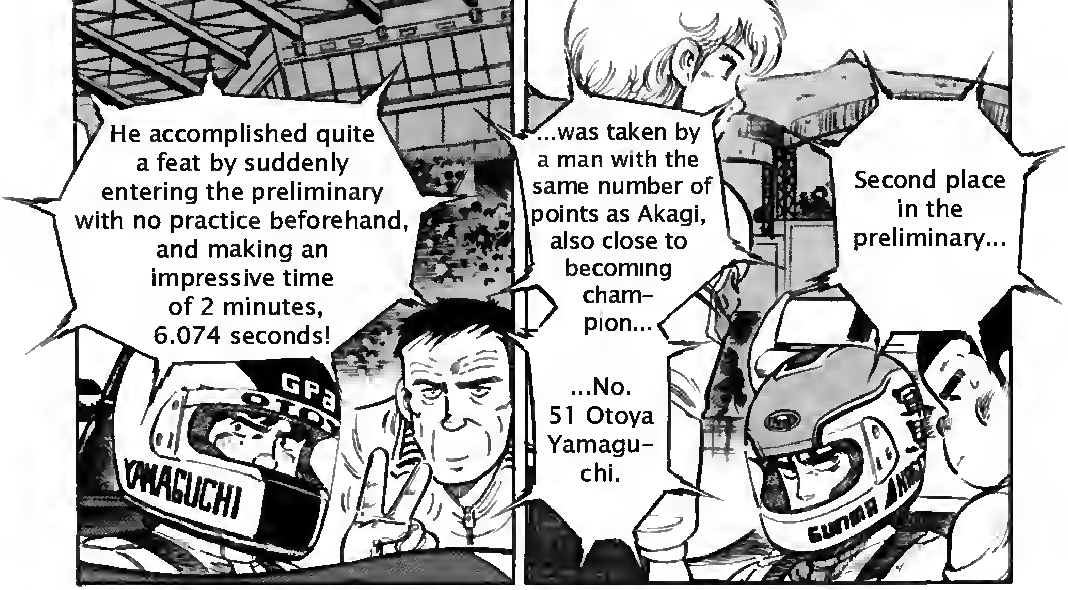
Yasu's gonna fill in as team director today.
He just called and said he's got a meeting with a sponsor.
SQUISH
Ow.

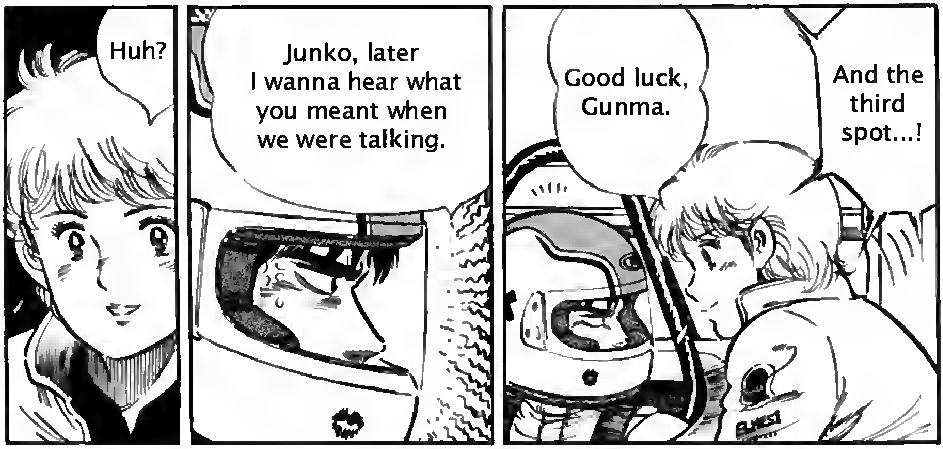

WHOOSH

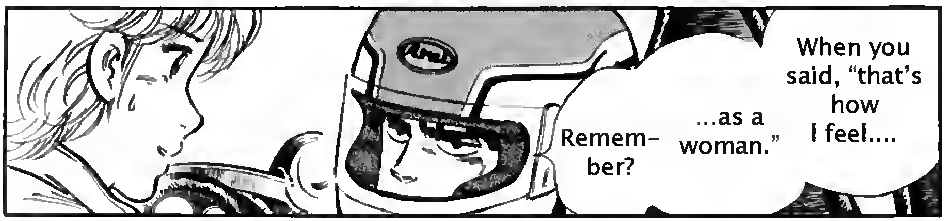

Somethin' to do with your next season.
He's said it's too important for the manager to make a decision on.
SQUEEZE-SQUEEZE

What do you think they're saying?
Not sure.
But it must be something positive.
I mean, you won in Macau, and if you win today, you'll be series champion!
Yeah!
It's gotta be positive!
Win this one, Gunma.
You're knotted up pretty bad, just like I thought.
A year's worth of exhaustion, and overdoing it in Macau, really took its toll on you.
Go all out in today's race, and you can rest up till next season.
LD's


VROOH
We're about to kick off the 10th race of this year's All-Japan F3 Championship.
VRRROOM
VR VR VR
VRRRRR
In yesterday's preliminary race, the pole position was taken by No. 80 Gunma Akagi, with a time of 2 minutes, 5.684 seconds.
VRRRRR
He's the closest driver to becoming this season's series champion!

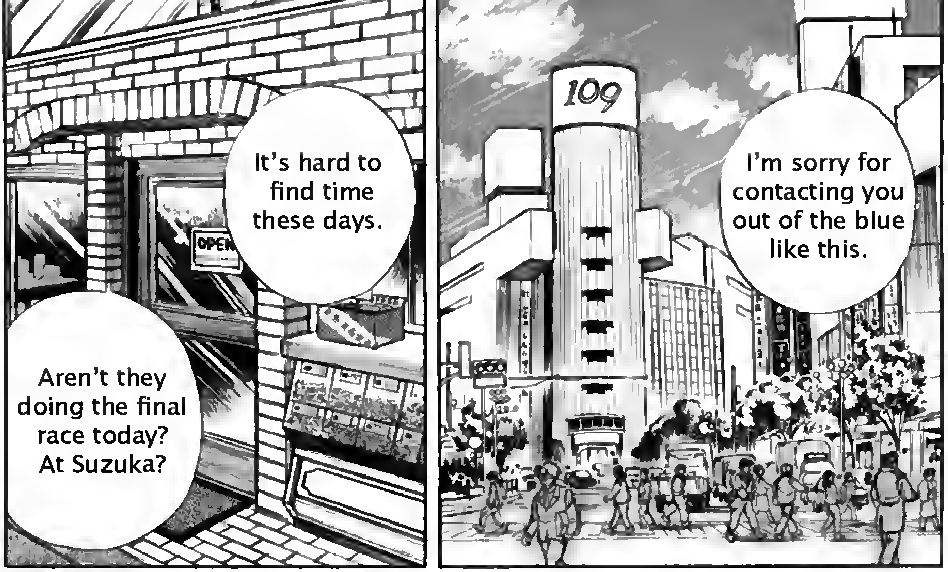

He accomplished quite a feat by suddenly entering the preliminary with no practice beforehand, and making an impressive time of 2 minutes, 6.074 seconds!
YAMAGUCHI
...was taken by a man with the same number of points as Akagi, also close to becoming champion...
...No. 51 Otoya Yamaguchi.
Second place in the preliminary...

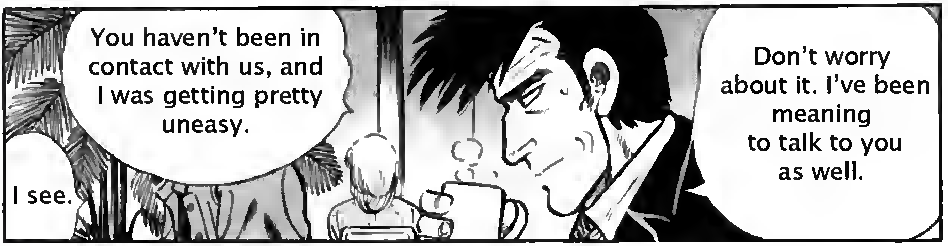

Huh?
Junko, later I wanna hear what you meant when we were talking.
Good luck, Gunma.
And the third spot...!

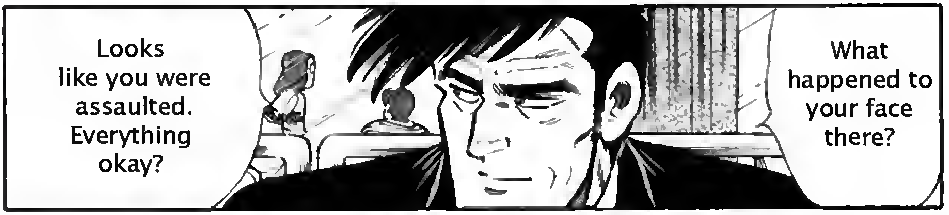

Remember?
...as a woman."
When you said, "that's how I feel....

Just a slip of the tongue.
Oh that.

VROOOOOOH
VRRR
All cars have entered the warm-up run, and will be off and racing soon!
VRRR
VRRRRR
Tsh.
VRRRR

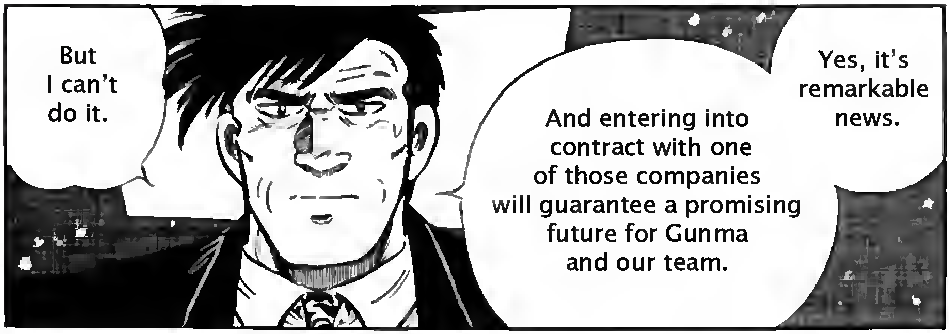

It's hard to find time these days.
Aren't they doing the final race today? At Suzuka?
OPEN
109
I'm sorry for contacting you out of the blue like this.

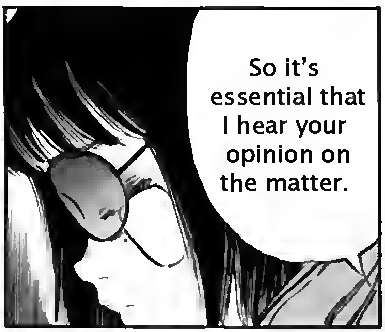

You haven't been in contact with us, and I was getting pretty uneasy.
I see.
Don't worry about it. I've been meaning to talk to you as well.

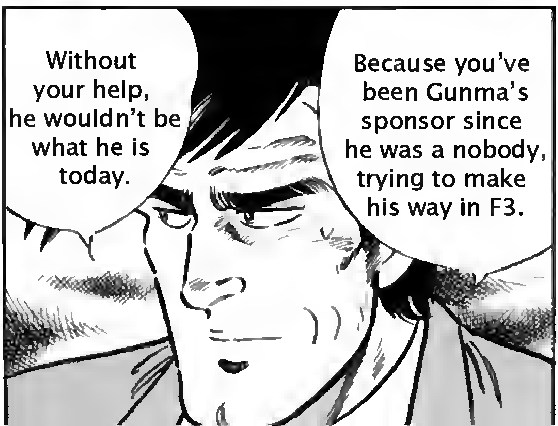

Looks like you were assaulted. Everything okay?
What happened to your face there?

Mr. Kuroi...
It's probably going to start getting difficult...
...to continue supporting Gunma Akagi for a while.
But these large, periodic payments I've been making, might have to stop.
It's not that I'm going to cut the sponsorship.
I'm not canceling the sponsorship.
Please don't misunderstand.
I see.
...
We want Gunma to advance to F3000 next year...
Actually, I have some news for you as well.
He did win in Macau, and it looks like he'll be champion this season!
He's been a little reckless at times too, but the results... are nothing short of remarkable.
We actually have two or three companies who are willing to sponsor Gunma.
Well, to be honest, it's just not enough.
...and in order to achieve that, your current sponsorship is...

Each has offered a three-year contract to be his main sponsor, for an exceptional amount of money.
We have three large companies showing interest in Gunma.
As we speak, you're Gunma's main source of funds, without question.
Which is why I really needed to get in touch with you about next season.
That's great news.
Wow.


But I can't do it.
And entering into contract with one of those companies will guarantee a promising future for Gunma and our team.
Yes, it's remarkable news.

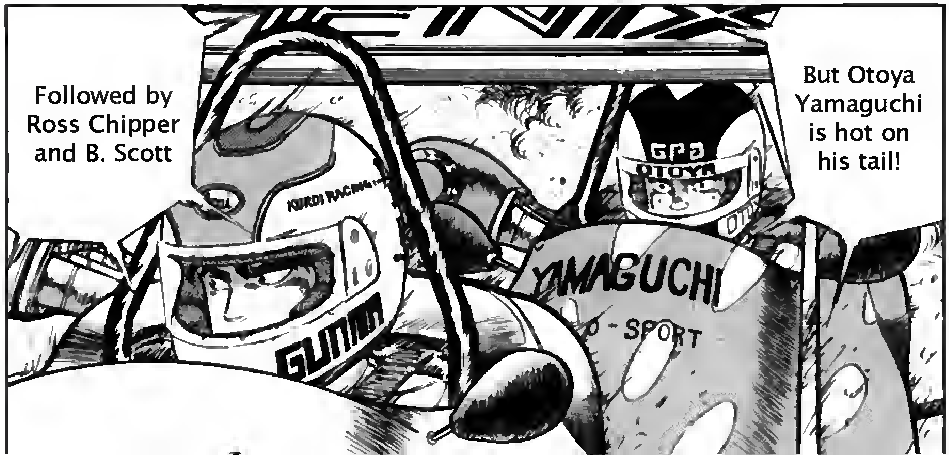

So it's essential that I hear your opinion on the matter.

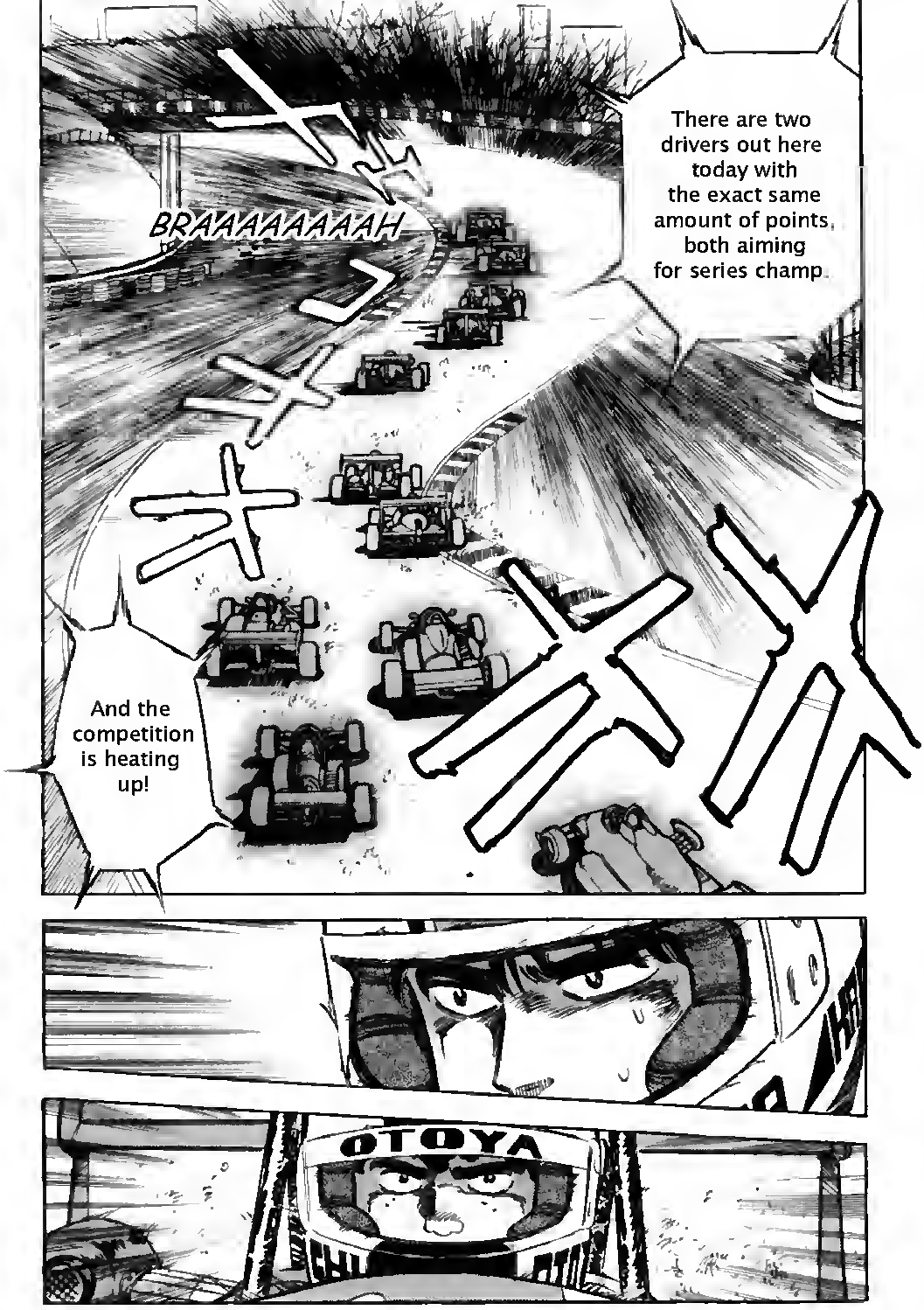

Without your help, he wouldn't be what he is today.
Because you've been Gunma's sponsor since he was a nobody, trying to make his way in F3.

...
He's famous now.
Gunma's really made a name for himself.
I see.
As to whether or not I'll step down as his main sponsor.
I'll give you a response by then.
Three days...
Please give me three days, Mr. Kuroi.
Three days is all I ask sir!
Absolutely.

That poor woman.
...she's been paying that money out of pocket all this time.
Most likely...
...I can't help to think her bat-tered face has something to do with it.
And now that she's having financial troubles...
How pitiful...
The things a woman will do for love...

VROOOOH
Gunma Akagi is off to a great start from the pole position, as he rounds the first corner faster than anyone!
KUROI RACING TEAM
PHENIX
POTENZA
AOYAN

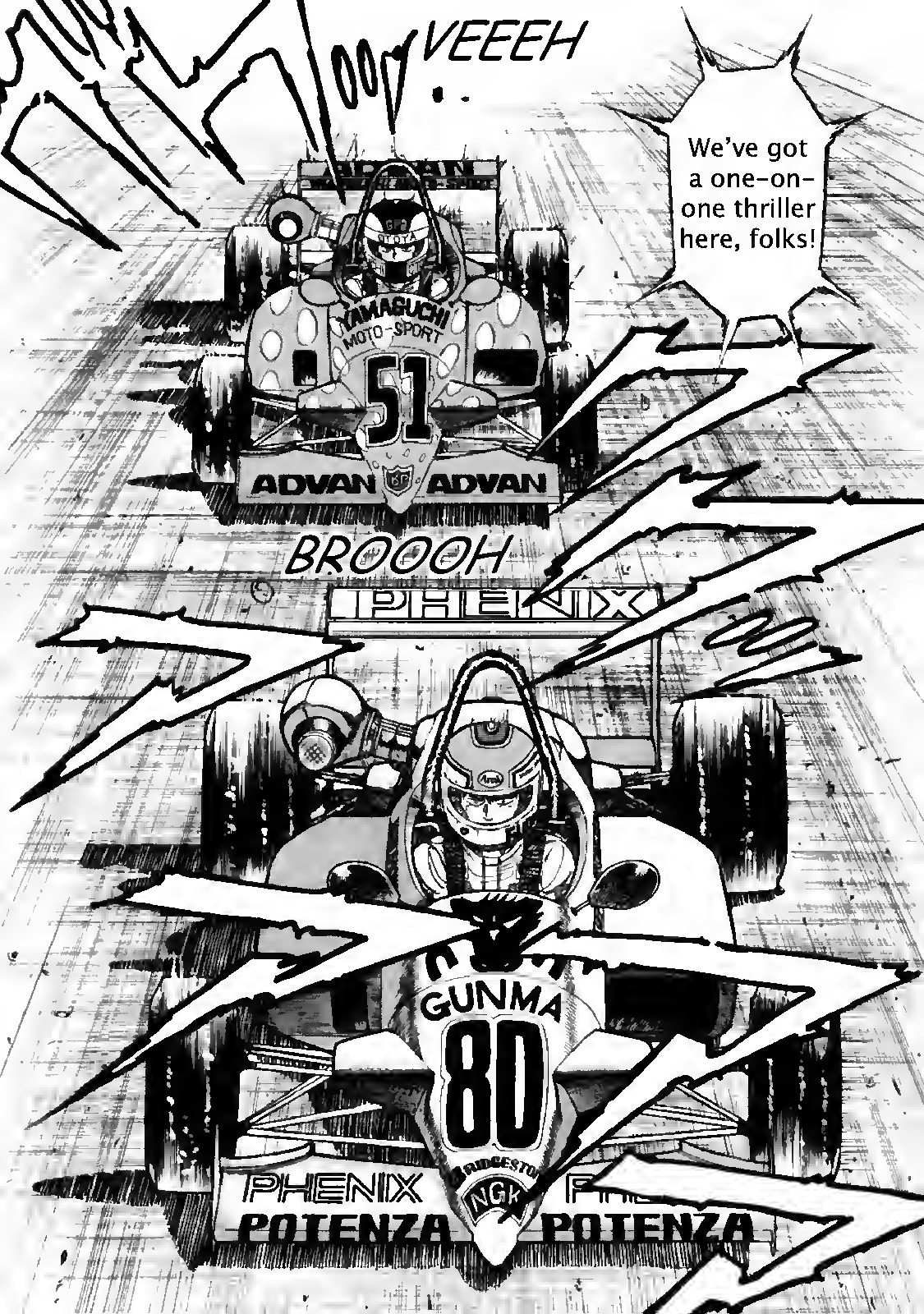

Followed by Ross Chipper and B. Scott
But Otoya Yamaguchi is hot on his tail!
KUROI RACING
GUNMA
YAMAGUCHI
OTOYA
GP1

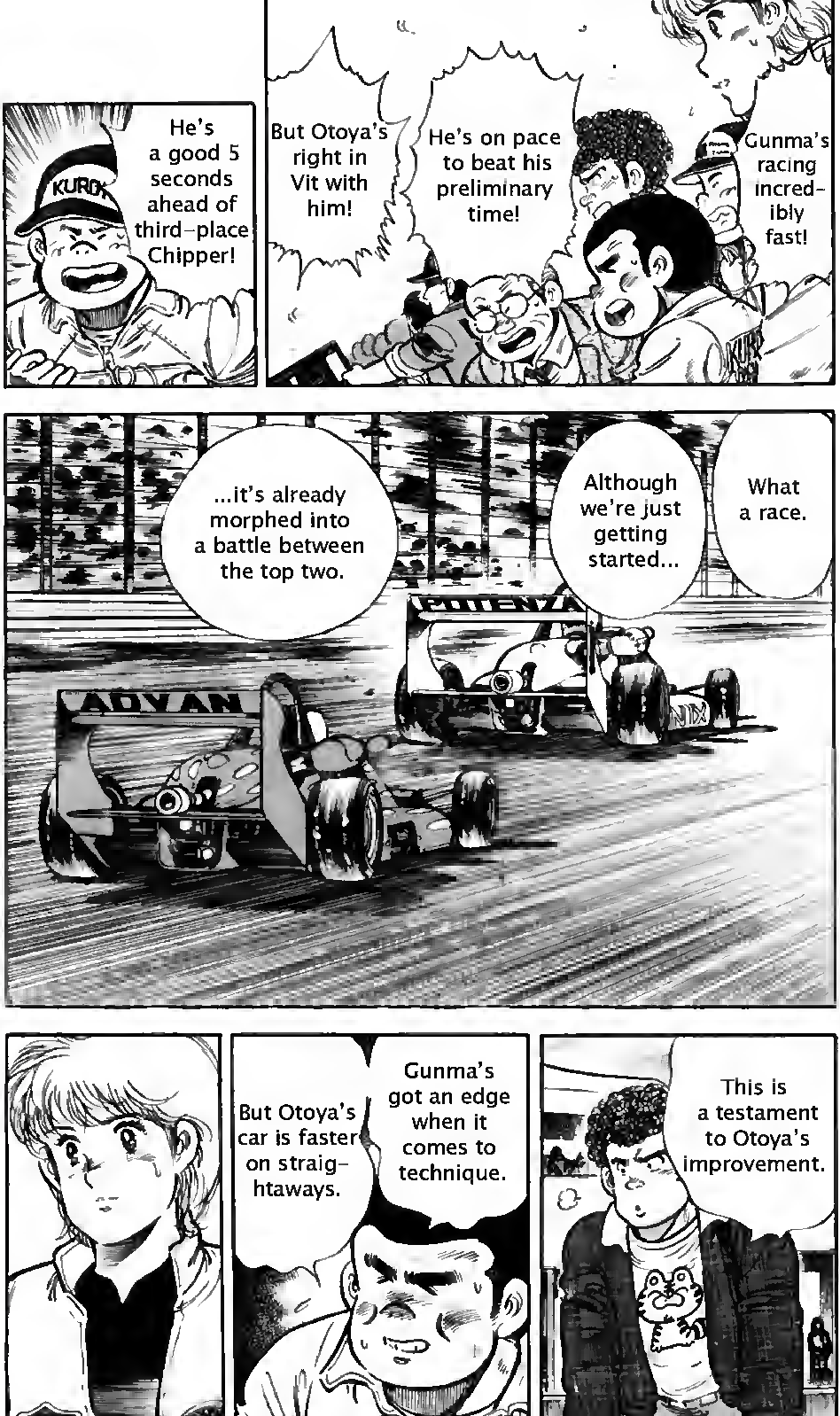

BRAAAAAAAAAH
There are two drivers out here today with the exact same amount of points, both aiming for series champ.
And the competition is heating up!
OTOYA

VOL.11

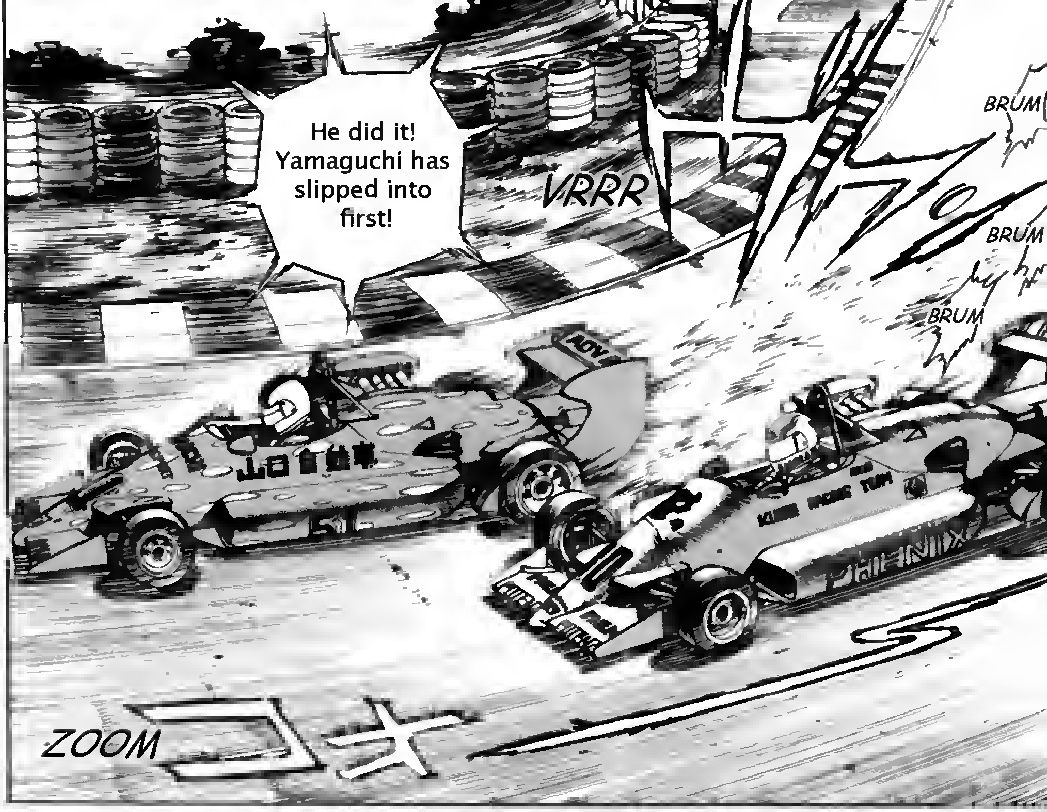
Chapter 7: Dog Fight

SHOOM
Who will win the '87 All-Japan F3 Championship?
BRIDGESTONE
VOOOOH
Gunma Akagi, or Otoya Yamaguchi?
VROOOOH
We'll find out today, at the final race here in Suzuka!
Currently on their fifth lap, those two have completely broken free of the others!
BRAAAAAAAAH
Take a look.

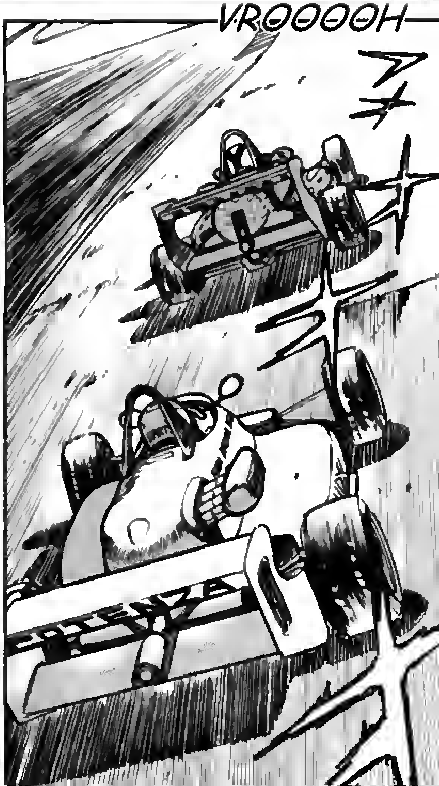

VEEEH
We've got a one-on-one thriller here, folks!
YAMAGUCHI
MOTO-SPORT
51
ADVAN
ADVAN
BROOOH
PHENIX
GUNMA
80
BRIDGESTONE
NGK
PHENIX
POTENZA
POTENZA

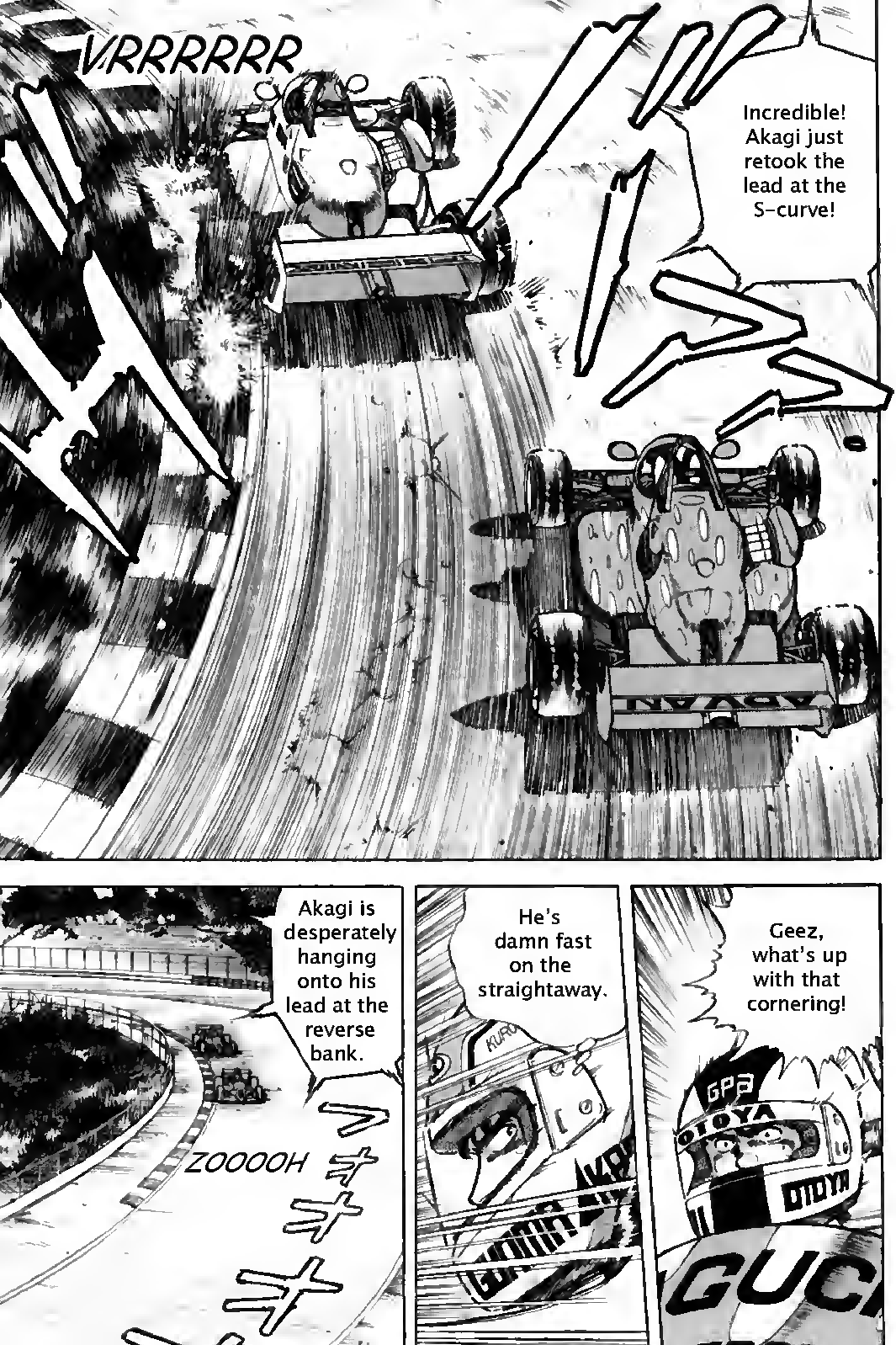

He's a good 5 seconds ahead of third-place Chipper!
But Otoya's right in Vit with him!
He's on pace to beat his preliminary time!
Gunma's racing incred-ibly fast!
...it's already morphed into a battle between the top two.
Although we're just getting started...
What a race.
ADVAN
POTENZA
But Otoya's car is faster on straig-htaways.
Gunma's got an edge when it comes to technique.
This is a testament to Otoya's improvement.

PHEN
Bastard.
No. 51 Otoya Yamaguchi just entered Akagi's slipstream on the home straight!
VROOOOOOH
Heh!
He's gonna pass!
BROOOH


He did it! Yamaguchi has slipped into first!
VRRR
BRUM
BRUM
BRUM
ZOOM
PHOENIX

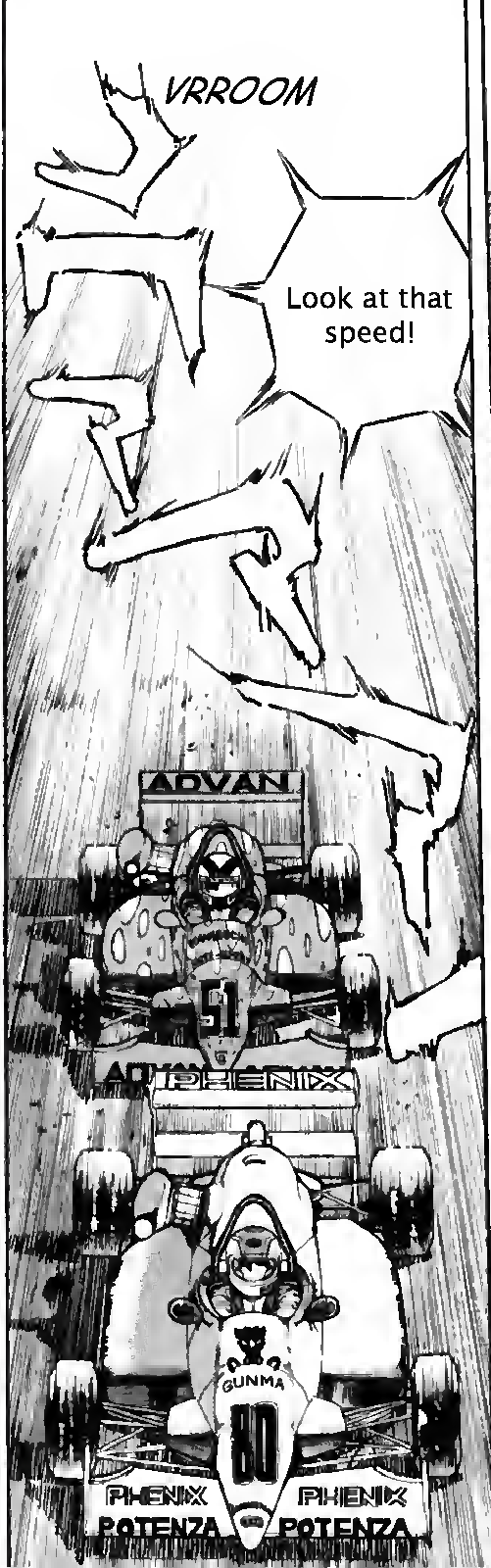
BRAAAAAAAH
ADVAN
ADVAN
ADVAN
51


VROOOOH
PHOENIX


VRRRRRR
Incredible! Akagi just retook the lead at the S-curve!
Akagi is desperately hanging onto his lead at the reverse bank.
ZOOOOH
He's damn fast on the straightaway.
Geez, what's up with that cornering!
GPB
OTOYA
GUC

KRUK
Gotta gain more distance before that!
At this rate he'll pass me up again at the back straight!
Akagi has put a little space between them!
BRIDGESTONE
Both cars have passed through Degner Curve into the hairpin!
bilF1
VRRRRRRR
VROOM
VROOM
You're not getting away.
ADVAN
OTOYA

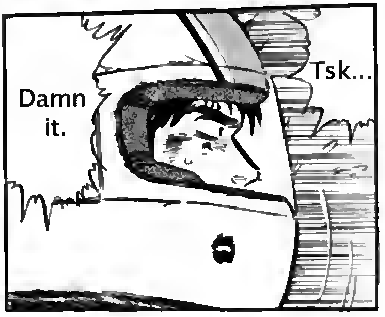
BRAAAAH
Yamaguchi's car takes those straightaways better than Akagi's can!
VROOOOH
Akagi seems to be using his superior cornering to inch in front of Yamaguchi.
YAMAGUCHI
Heh heh!
Come on!
KRR
They're into the back straight!
VRR
ZOOOOOM


VRROOM
Look at that speed!
ADVAN
51
ADVAN
PHENIX
GUNMA
80
PHENIX
POTENZA
PHENIX
POTENZA

VROOM
ZOOOM
ADVAN
51
ADVAN
ADVAN
PHENIX
GUNMA
80
PHENIX
POTENZA
PHENIX
POTENZA

VRROOM
Akagi's just been passed again on the back straight!
ZOOOOOOOOM

Heh heh! Told ya I'm faster!


Damn it.
Tsk...

...I'd say both Gunma and his car...
...are flat out exhau-sted.

I don't wanna make excuses...
I'm sorry, I did everything I could.
...but if I had to guess...

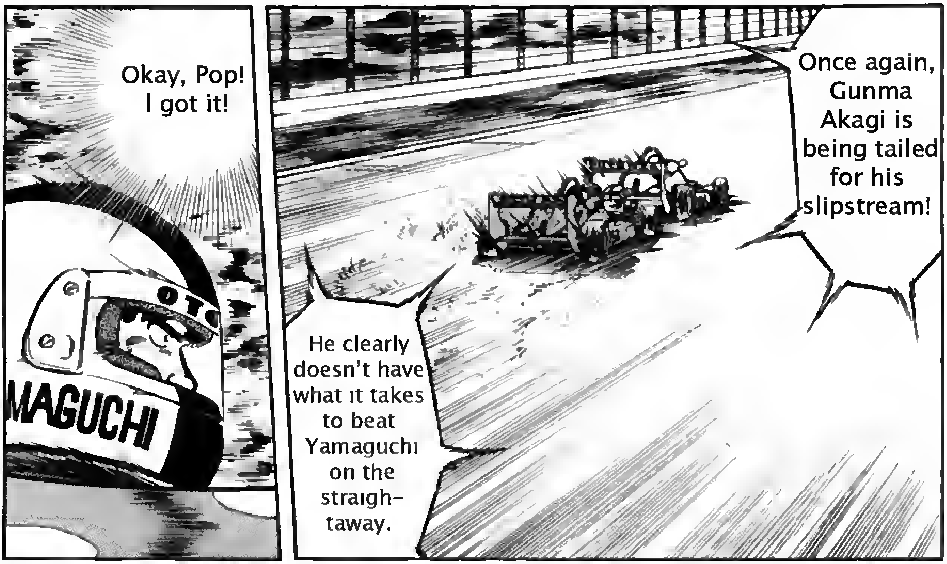
How come there's such a difference in speed on the straights!?
What's up with that, Tamotsu!?
Goro ...

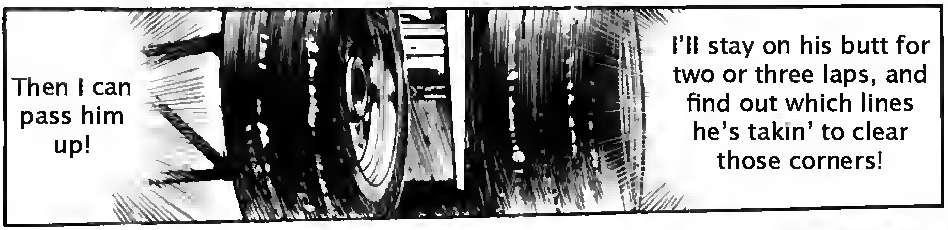
But I'm surprised at how well Otoya's car is performing!
Gunma's got the course record, after all!
That's right! We can't blame Tamotsu for this!
...can really take its toll, and that shows up in the final race.
Going at full speed for 10 races in a single year, or 11 including Macau...
So he shouldn't be a bit tired. But I'm baffled at how incredible his car is running.
...and he started from the 7th race into the season.
I realize he didn't race at Macau...
Well, I heard through the grapevine that a huge sponsor put its full support behind Otoya, with an extraordinary amount of money!
I guess the rumor is true.
And of course, he'll be moving onto F3000 next season!
What rumor?

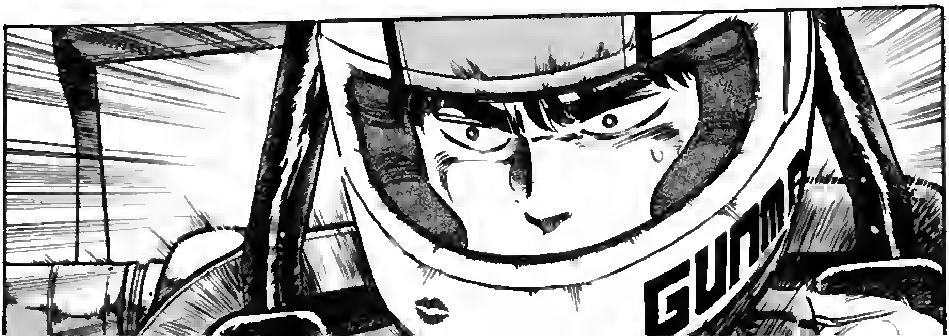
Winning is all about my lucky vibe!
Gunma can't beat me!
He ain't got luck on his side!
...he keeps getting passed at the corners.
Even with all that money pumped into his car...
ZOOOOOOM
Moving out of the chicane and into the final corner, Gunma once again uses his brilliant corner work to pass up Yamaguchi!
GUNMA
80

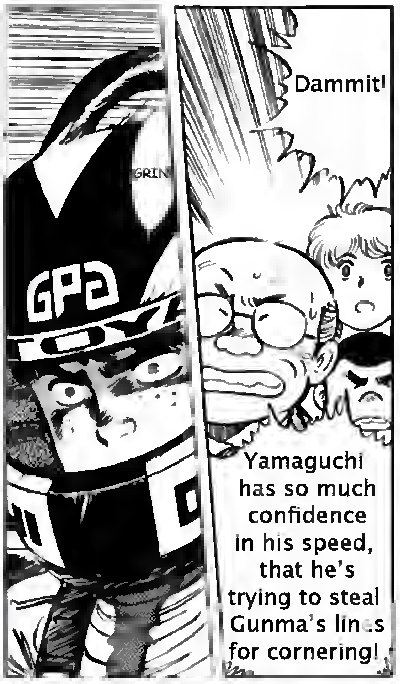
Which of these young men will emerge as season champion!?
Looks like a fight to the finish, folks!
We've got a real dog fight on our hands! It's impossible to tell how the scales will tip at this point!
Otoya Yamaguchi, with his lightning speed down the straigh-taways?
Or Gunma Akagi with his brilliant cornering technique?
ZOOOOOOM
GP3
OTOYA
YAMAGUCHI
BRIDGESTONE
POTENZA
BATLAX

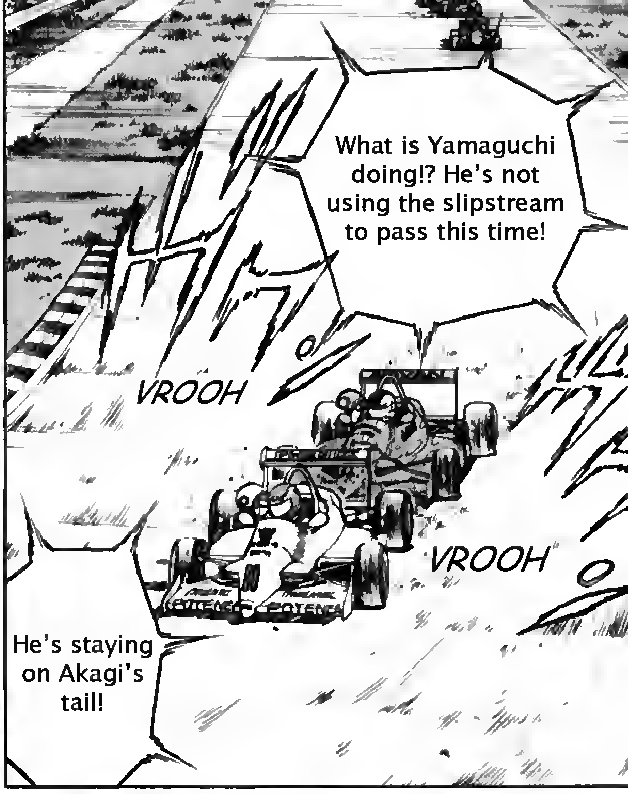
"Don't pass. Stay on his tail and steal his cornering style."
That sign!
GPA
TOYA
51

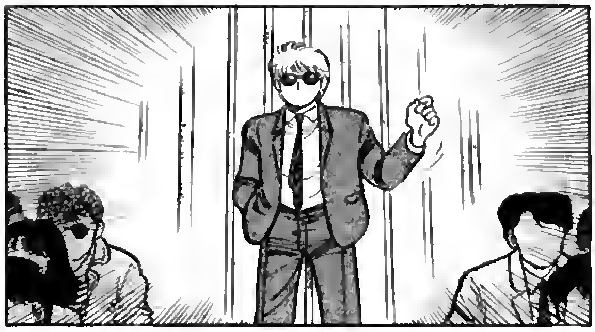

Okay, Pop! I got it!
MAGUCHI
He clearly doesn't have what it takes to beat Yamaguchi on the straigh-taway.
Once again, Gunma Akagi is being tailed for his slipstream!

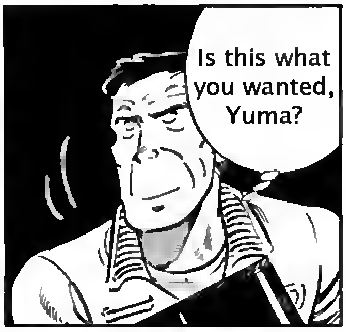

Then I can pass him up!
I'll stay on his butt for two or three laps, and find out which lines he's takin' to clear those corners!

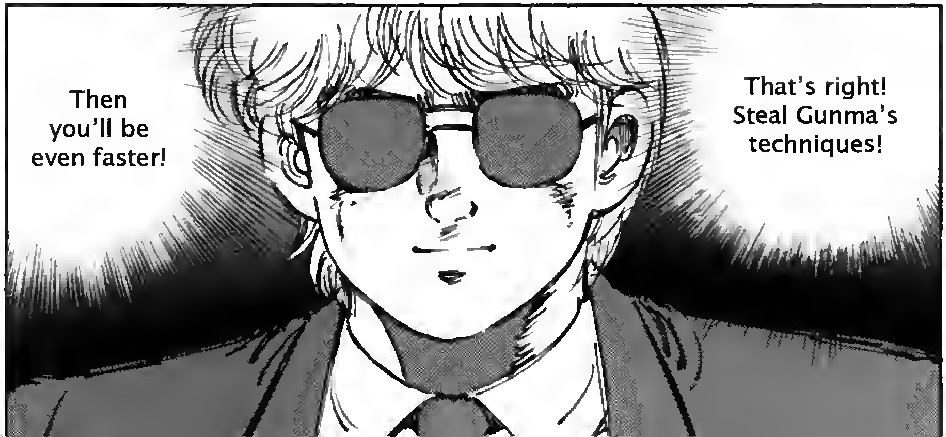

GUNMA

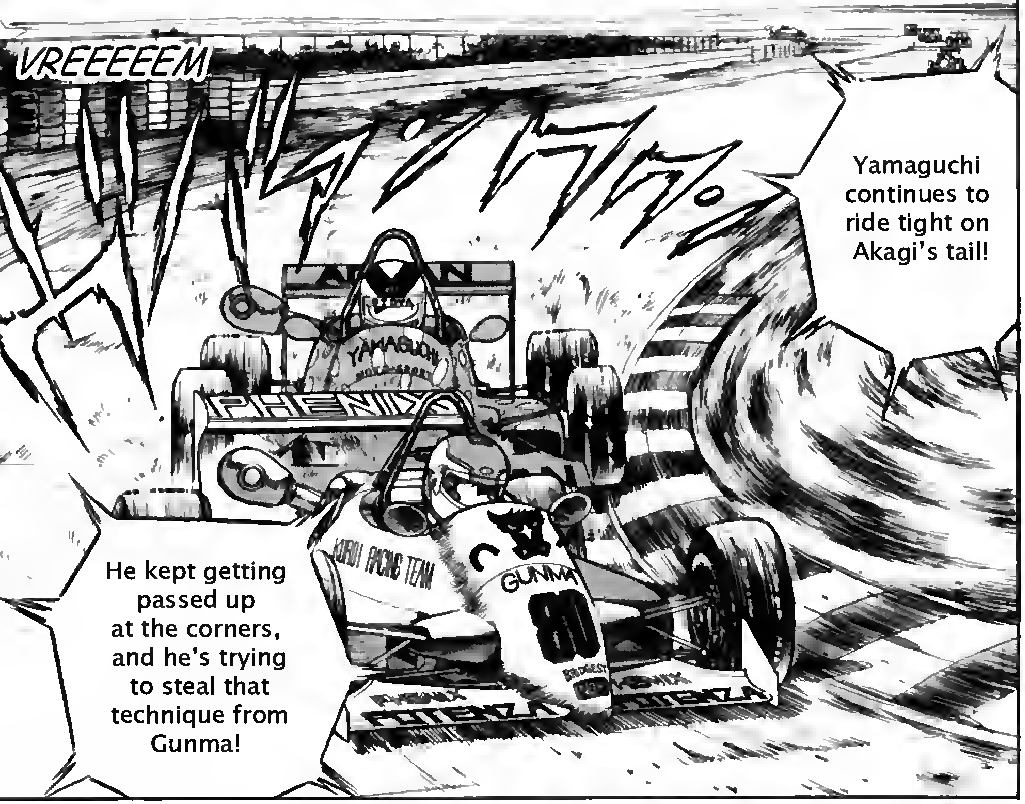

Dammit!
Yamaguchi has so much confidence in his speed, that he's trying to steal Gunma's lines for cornering!

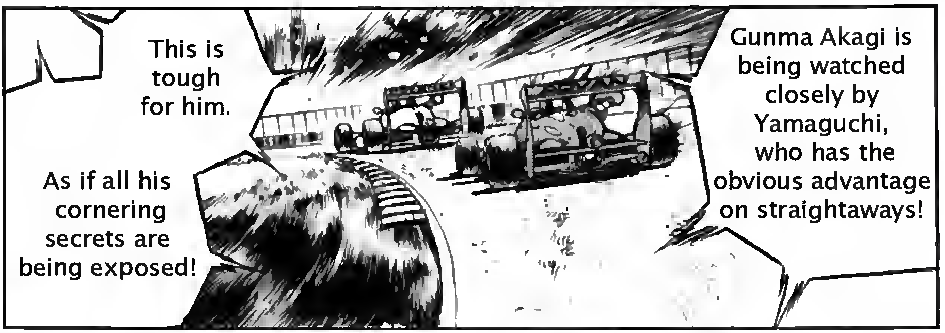

What is Yamaguchi doing!? He's not using the slipstream to pass this time!
VROOH
VROOH
He's staying on Akagi's tail!

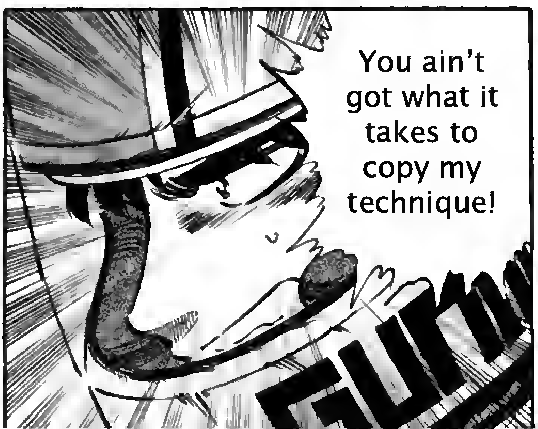



Is this what you wanted, Yuma?


Then you'll be even faster!
That's right! Steal Gunma's techniques!

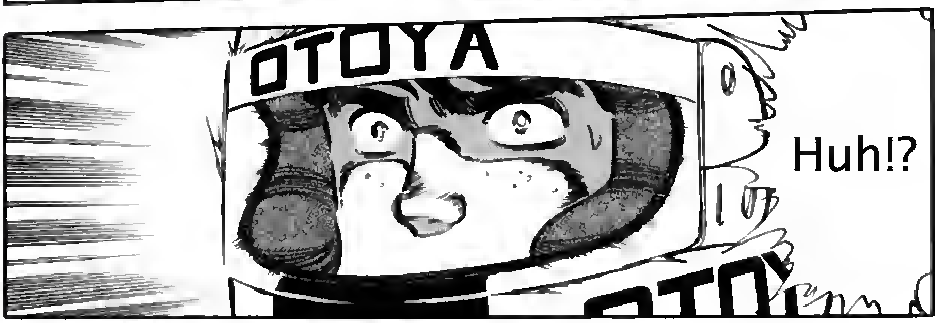

VREEEEEM
Yamaguchi continues to ride tight on Akagi's tail!
He kept getting passed up at the corners, and he's trying to steal that technique from Gunma!
PHENIX
YAMAGUCHI
GUNMA
80


This is tough for him.
As if all his cornering secrets are being exposed!
Gunma Akagi is being watched closely by Yamaguchi, who has the obvious advantage on straightaways!

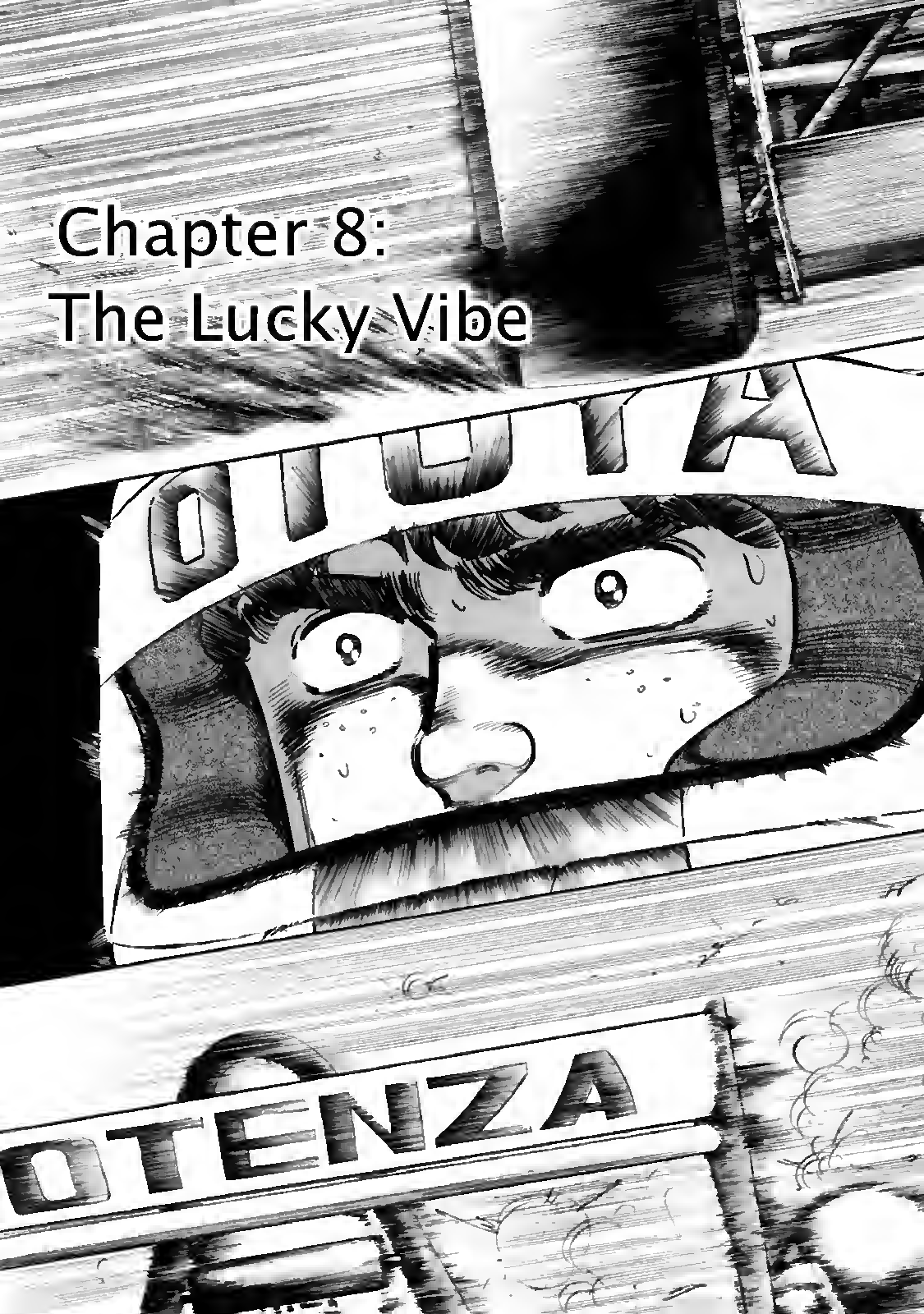

You ain't got what it takes to copy my technique!
GUNMA

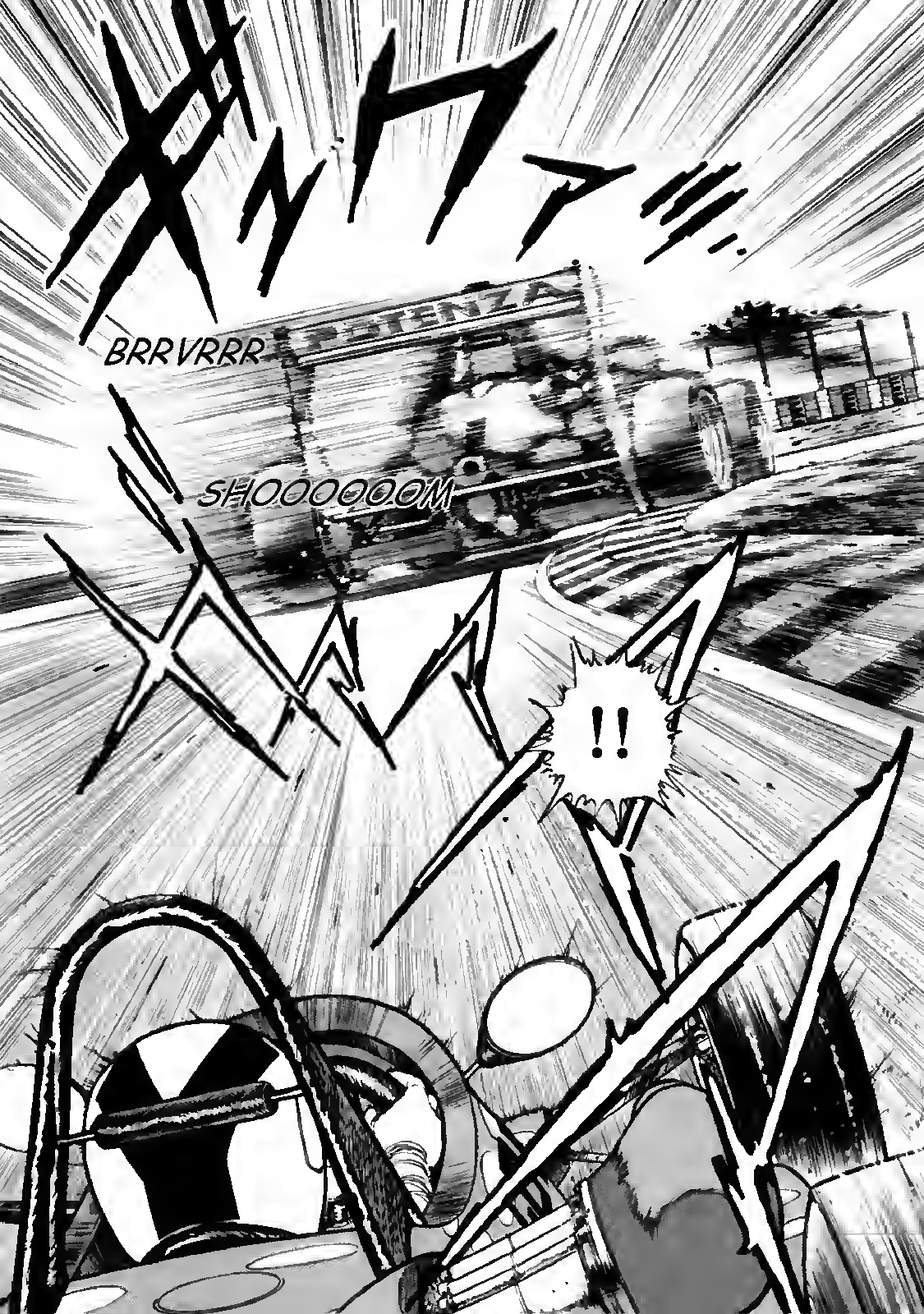
Heh heh heh... Wiseass.
GUNMA

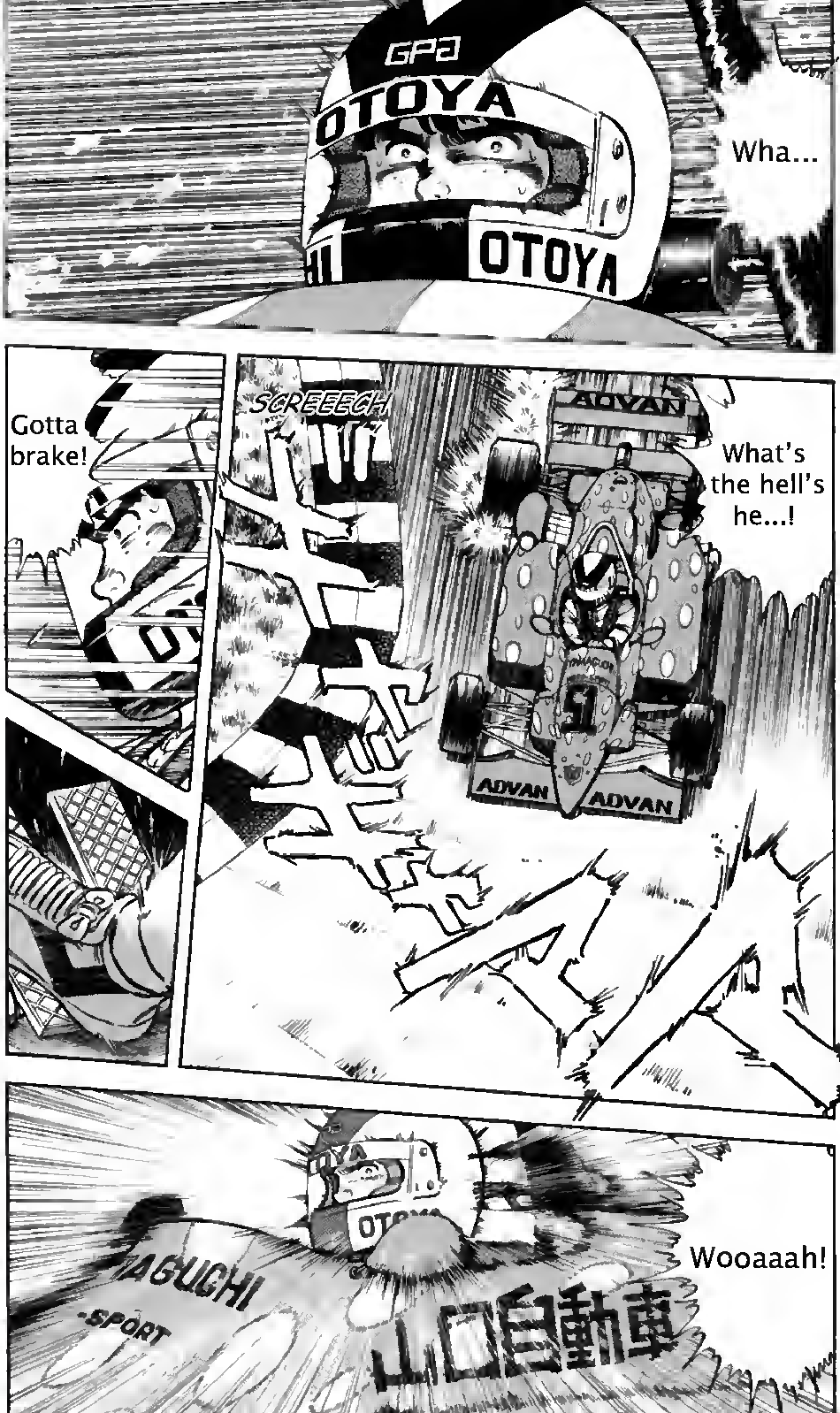
SCREE
POTENZA
SPIRITS


OTOYA
Huh!?

Chapter 8: The Lucky Vibe

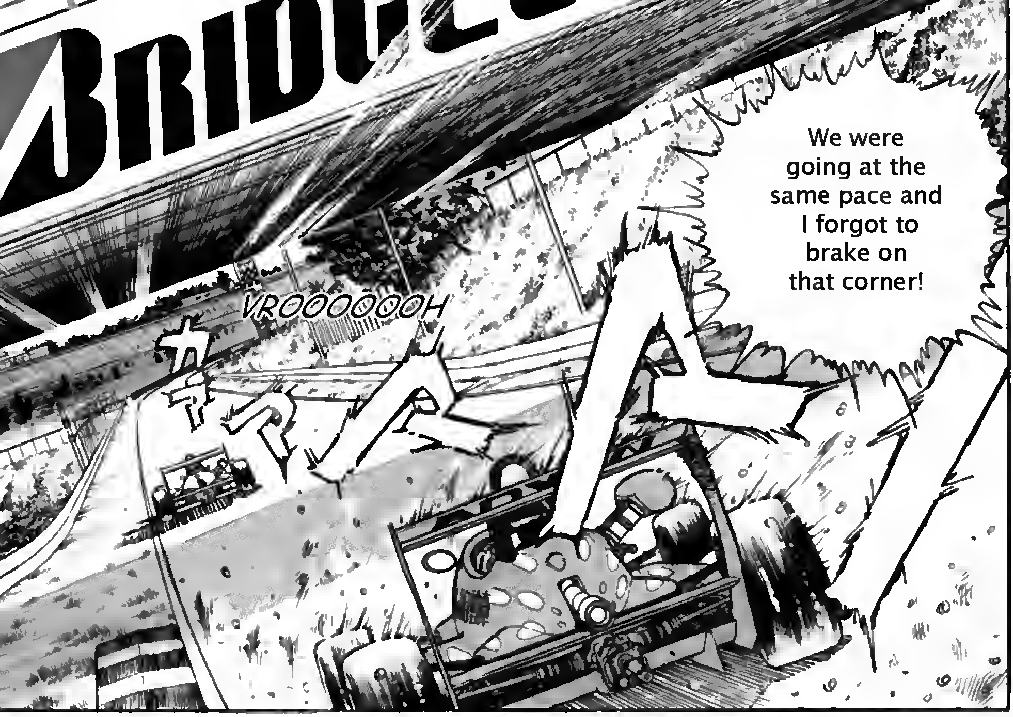


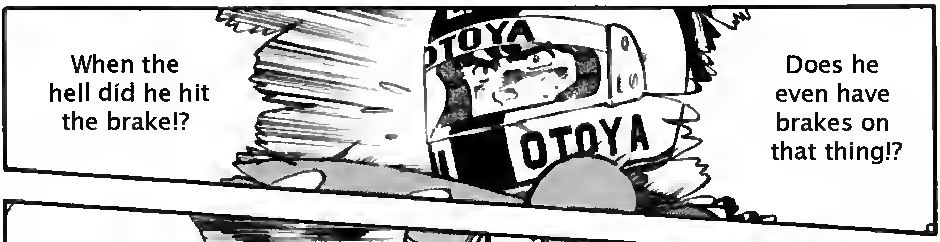

BRRVRRR
POTENZA
SHOOOOOOM
!!

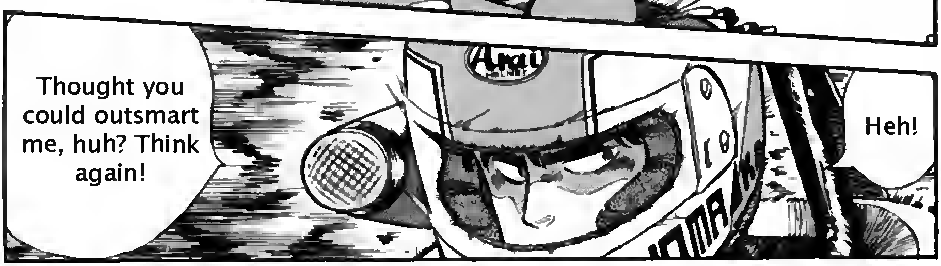

GP2
OTOYA
OTOYA
Wha...
Gotta brake!
SCREEECH
ADVAN
What's the hell's he...!
ADVAN
ADVAN
OTOYA
Wooaaah!
IAGUCHI
SPORT
山口自動車

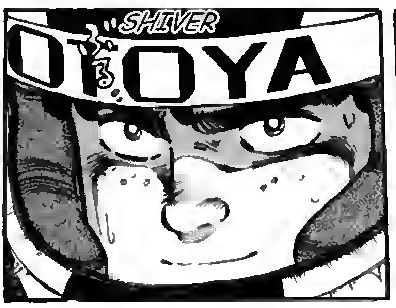
SCREEECH
SHREEEEP

He spun out in the gravel and managed to get back on track!
Damn you!
No.
Oh my! Otoya Yamaguchi just spun off the track at Degner Curve!

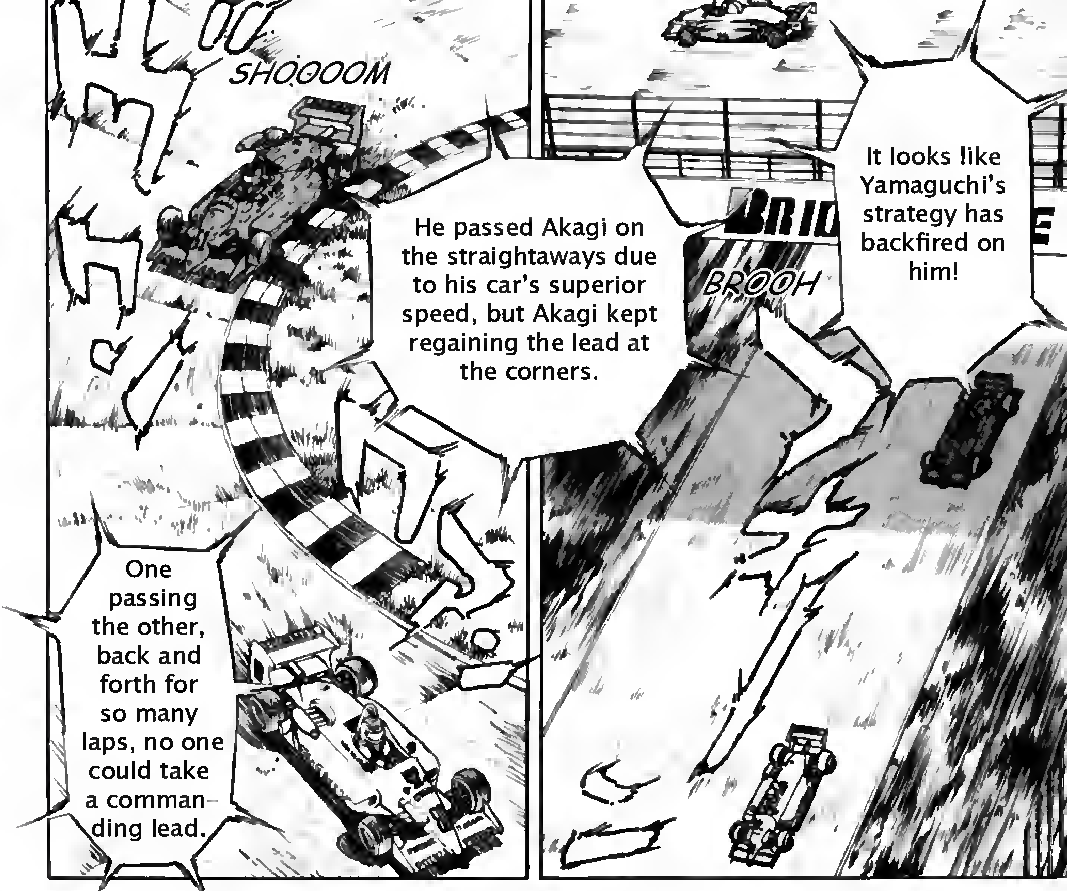

BRIDGE
VROOOOOOH
We were going at the same pace and I forgot to brake on that corner!

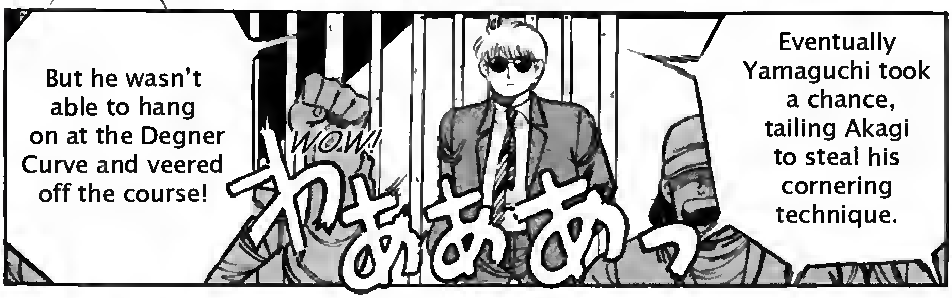

When the hell did he hit the brake!?
OTOYA
Does he even have brakes on that thing!?


Thought you could outsmart me, huh? Think again!
Heh!


SHIVER
OTOYA

Go take a little nap on the grass!
GUIMA


SHOOOOM
BROOH
It looks like Yamaguchi's strategy has backfired on him!
He passed Akagi on the straightaways due to his car's superior speed, but Akagi kept regaining the lead at the corners.
One passing the other, back and forth for so many laps, no one could take a commanding lead.


But he wasn't able to hang on at the Degner Curve and veered off the course!
WOW!
わぁぁぁぁ
Eventually Yamaguchi took a chance, tailing Akagi to steal his cornering technique.

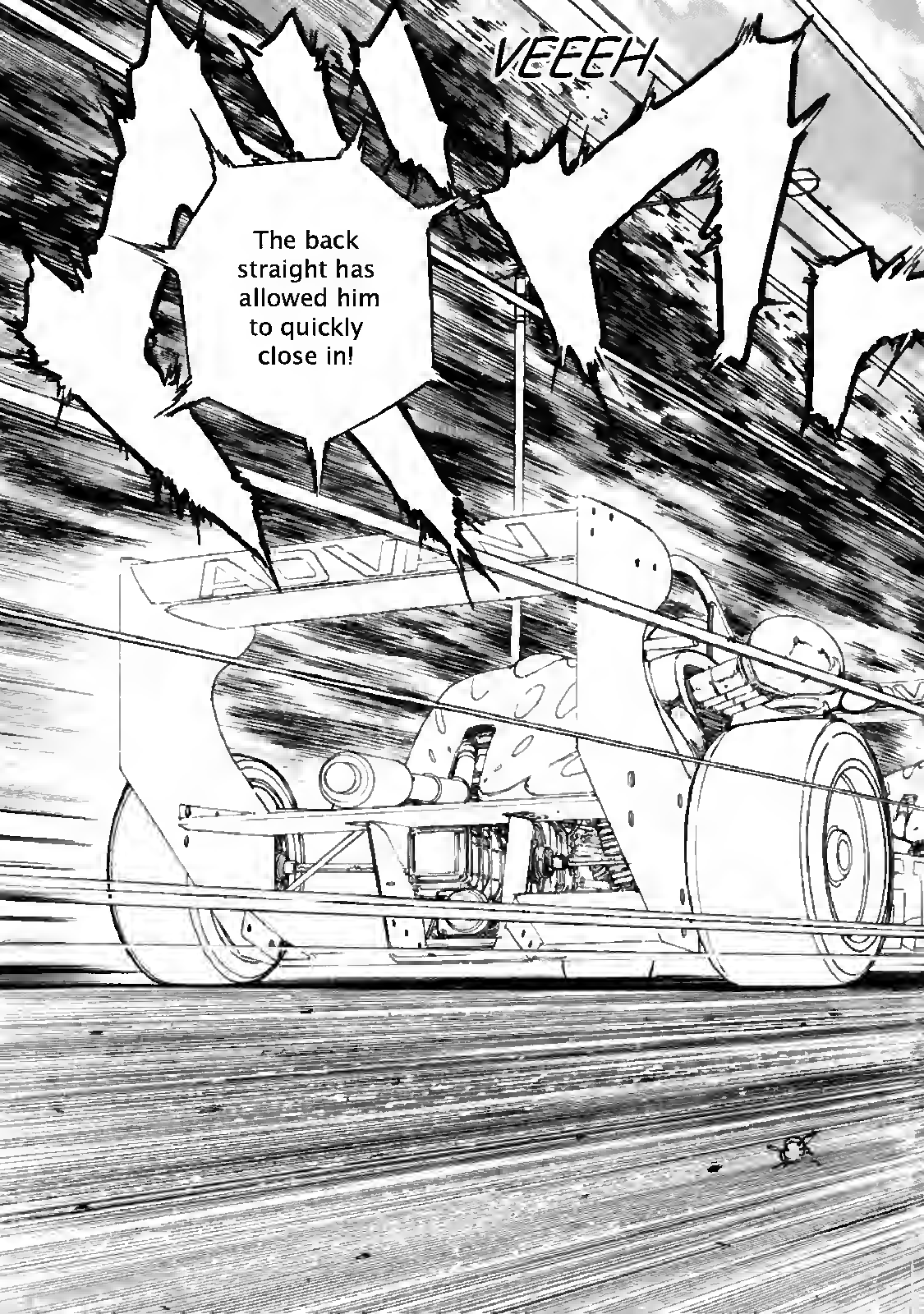
Serves ya right, Yamaguchi!
Nice one, Gunma!

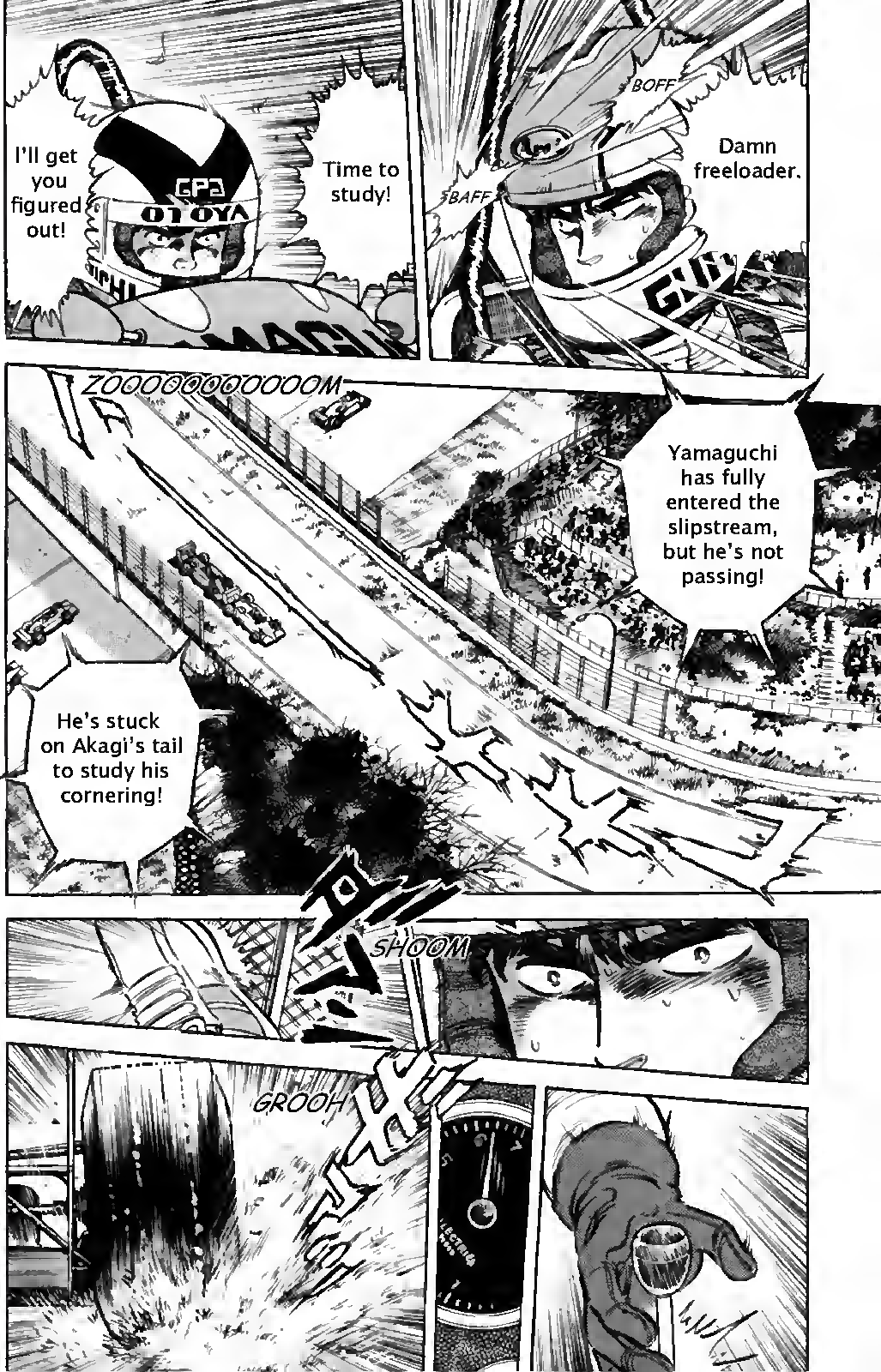
Incredibly fast.
Gunma really is fast.

...Akagi.
Heh heh... This is my time to shine...
GPA
TOYA
VOOOOOOM
Yamaguchi and Akagi have bad chemistry, but Akagi's technique is clearly better!
It's like she's blessed me with a chance to learn these techniques.
You're nothin' but a two-bit street racer, and I've got Lady Luck on my side...
Yamaguchi is trying desperately to close the gap at the spoon!
Mobil F-1
Mobil 1
BREHHHH
They've just entered the back straight!

VEEEH
BRAAAAAAAH
The back straight has allowed him to quickly close in!
Yamaguchi's dominating on the straight as expected!
Look at that!
ADVAN
YAMAHA
POTENZA

BRAAAAAAAH
Yamaguchi's dominating on the straight as expected!
Look at that!

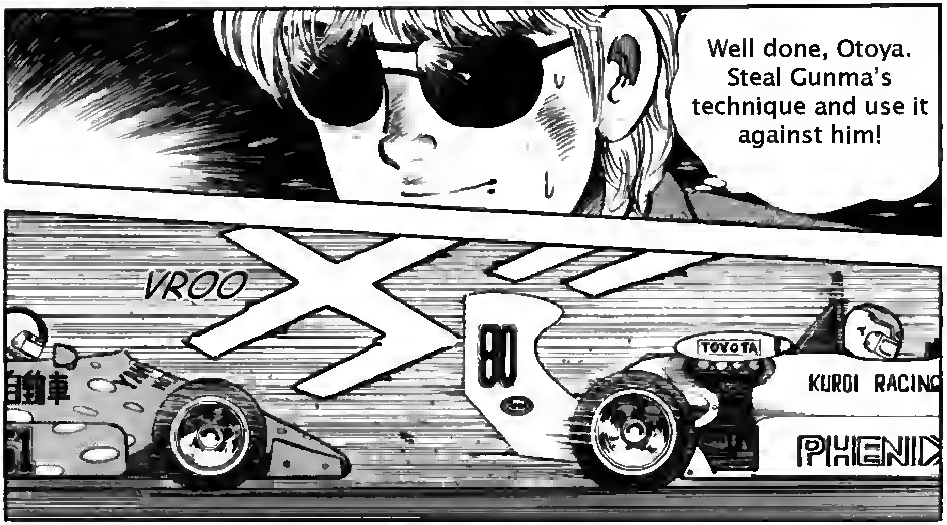

VEEEH
The back straight has allowed him to quickly close in!


I'll get you figured out!
Time to study!
BOFF
BAFF
Damn freeloader.
ZOOOOOOOOOOOM
Yamaguchi has fully entered the slipstream, but he's not passing!
He's stuck on Akagi's tail to study his cornering!
SHOOM
GROOH

ZOOM
But Yamaguchi is still no match for Akagi on those corners!
SCREECH
PHENIX
GUNMA
81
GPJ
OTOYA
SCREECH
He just hit the chicane!

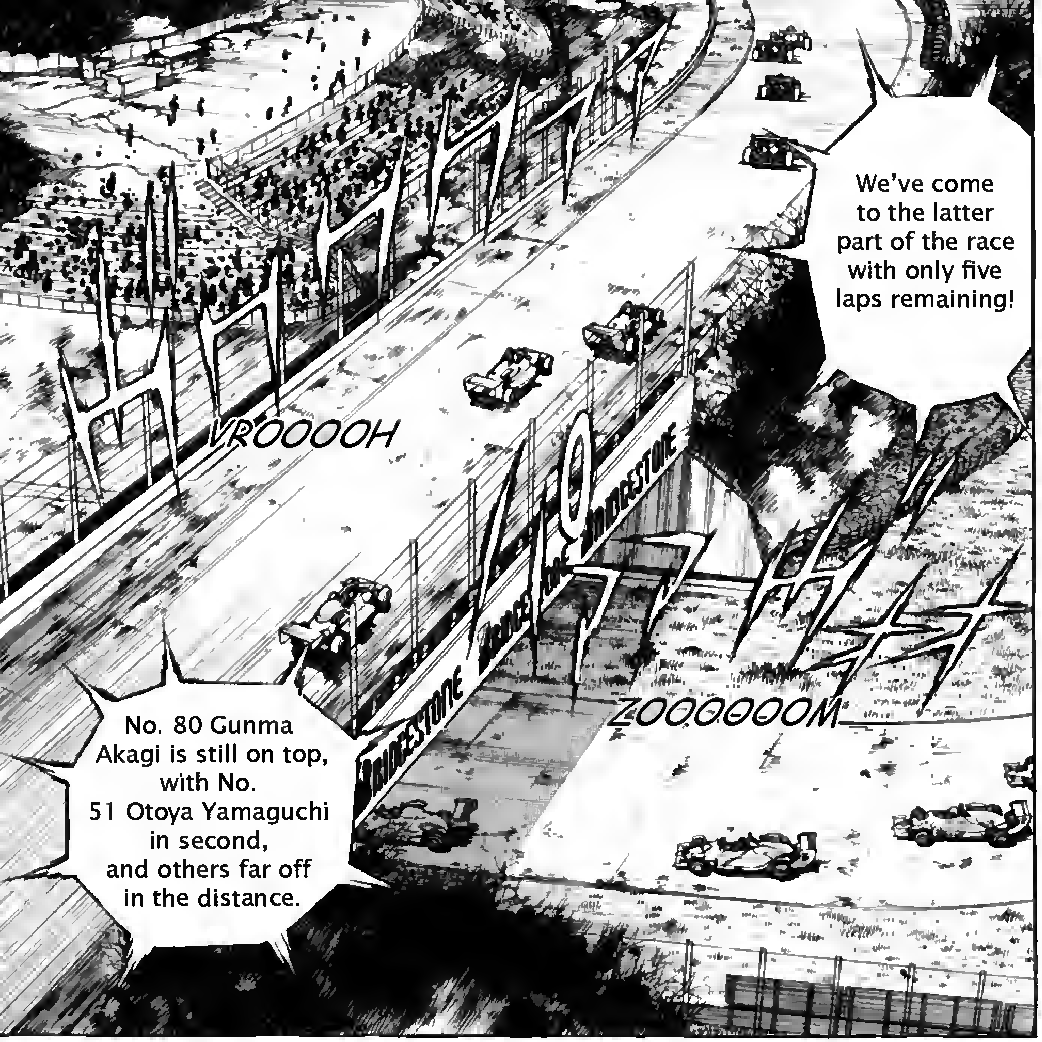
BUMP
VRAHH
BOFF
BOFF
BOFF
Whoa!
What speed!
ZOOOOM
Akagi has smashed into the zebra zone, and is flying into the final corner!

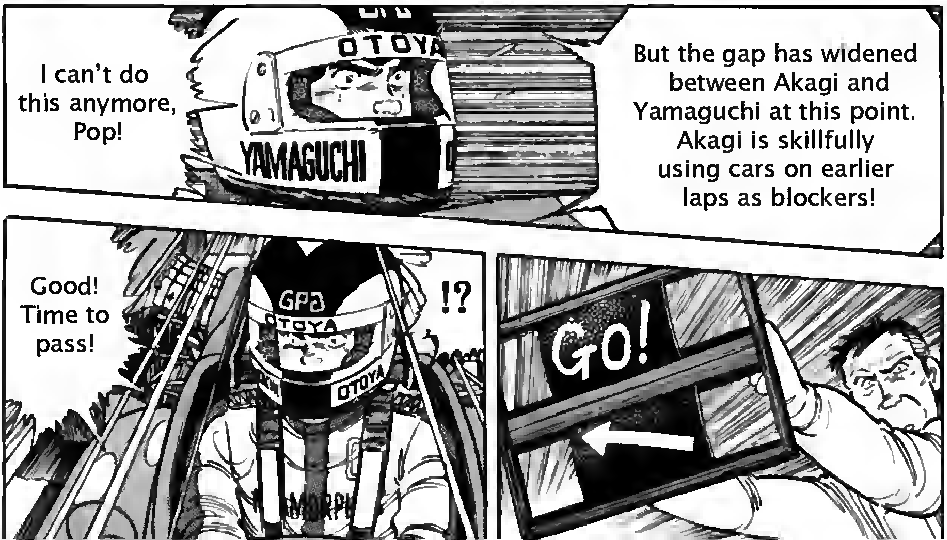
SHOOOOM
ALPINE
BRIDGESTONE
BRAAAH
ADVAN
Otoya Yamaguchi is taking the exact same line!


Well done, Otoya. Steal Gunma's technique and use it against him!
VROOOM
80
TOYOTA
KUROI RACING
PHENIX

Gunma!

Yamaguchi's car dominates on the straightaways, so Gunma better not show off his technique.
There's still about 10 laps left.
It's as if Gunma's coaching him!
Is he okay!?
GRIP
Yamaguchi can never copy Gunma's technique just by tailin' him for 10 or 20 laps!
It's all right!
That's right!
...in front of me!
Nobody gets...
GUNMA
80
POTENZA
POTENZA

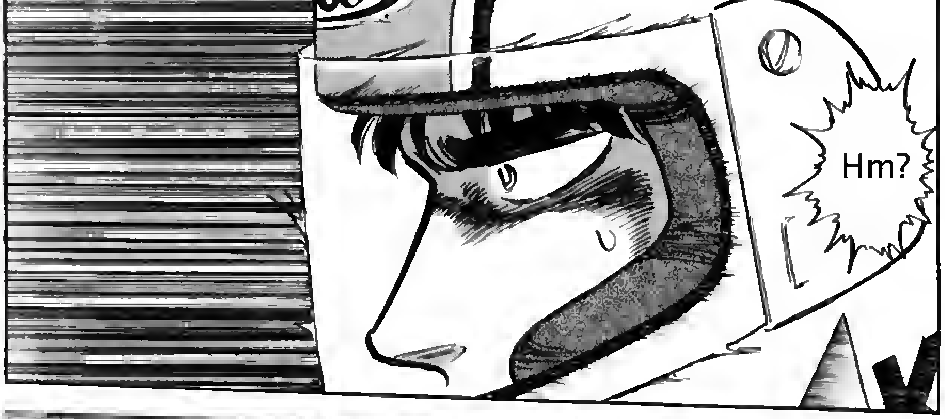

VROOOOH
ZOOOOOOM
BRIDGESTONE
We've come to the latter part of the race with only five laps remaining!
No. 80 Gunma Akagi is still on top, with No. 51 Otoya Yamaguchi in second, and others far off in the distance.

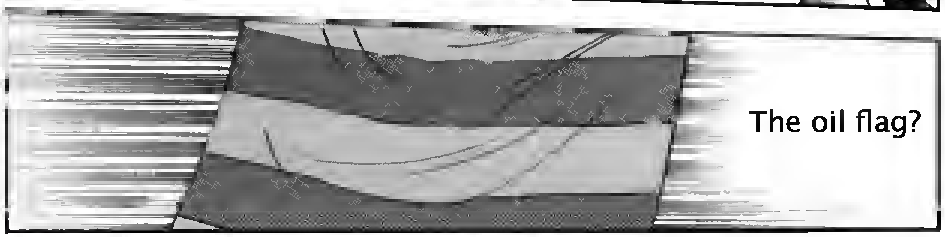

I can't do this anymore, Pop!
OTOYA
YAMAGUCHI
But the gap has widened between Akagi and Yamaguchi at this point. Akagi is skillfully using cars on earlier laps as blockers!
Good! Time to pass!
!?
GO!

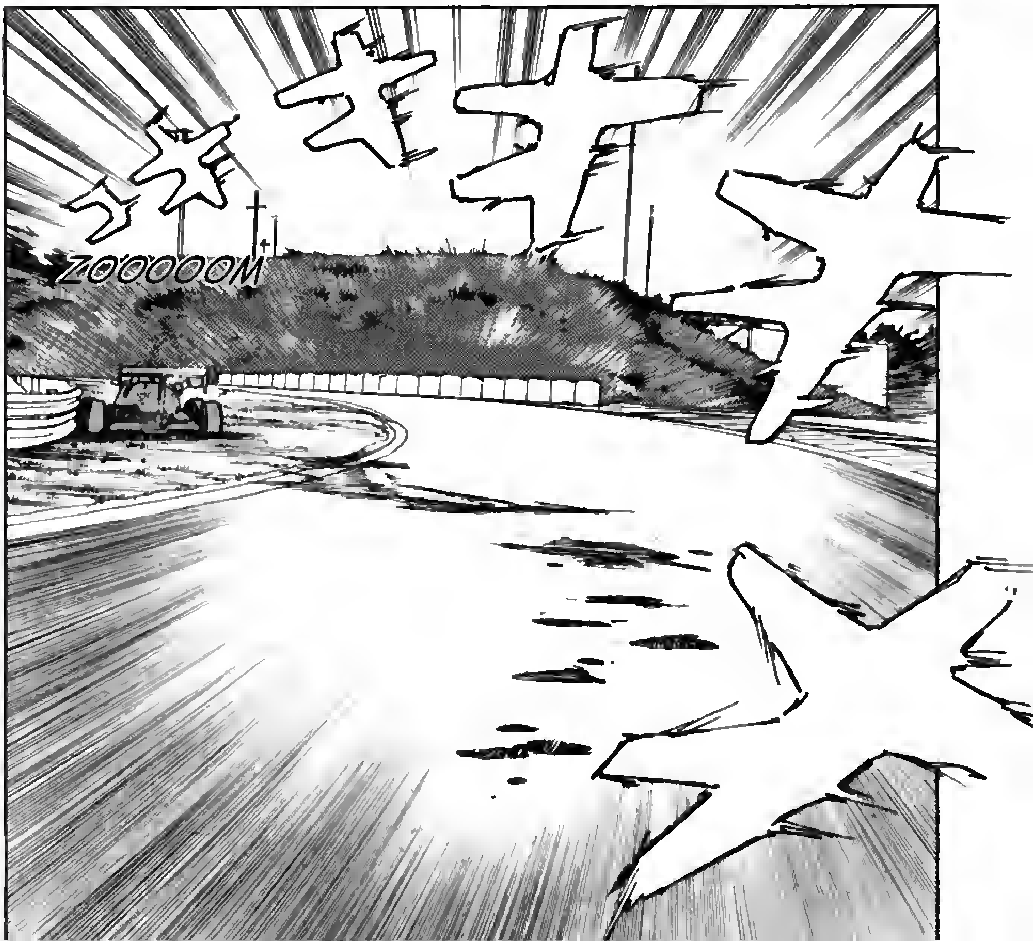
VROOH
Get the hell outta my way!
Yamaguchi can't seem to get past the other cars!
Keep it going, Gunma!
Look at Akagi weaving through those cars on earlier laps!
SHOOM
SHOOM
GUNMA KINGI
VROOH
Akagi is taking the first corner, while Yamaguchi is falling further behind!

His win in Macau was no fluke.
Man, Gunma's the real deal.
Yamaguchi has pushed his way past the other cars and shot into the first corner, but Akagi has already moved on to the S-curve!
No freaking way!
Gunma Akagi don't got any luck, he can't beat me.
VREHHH

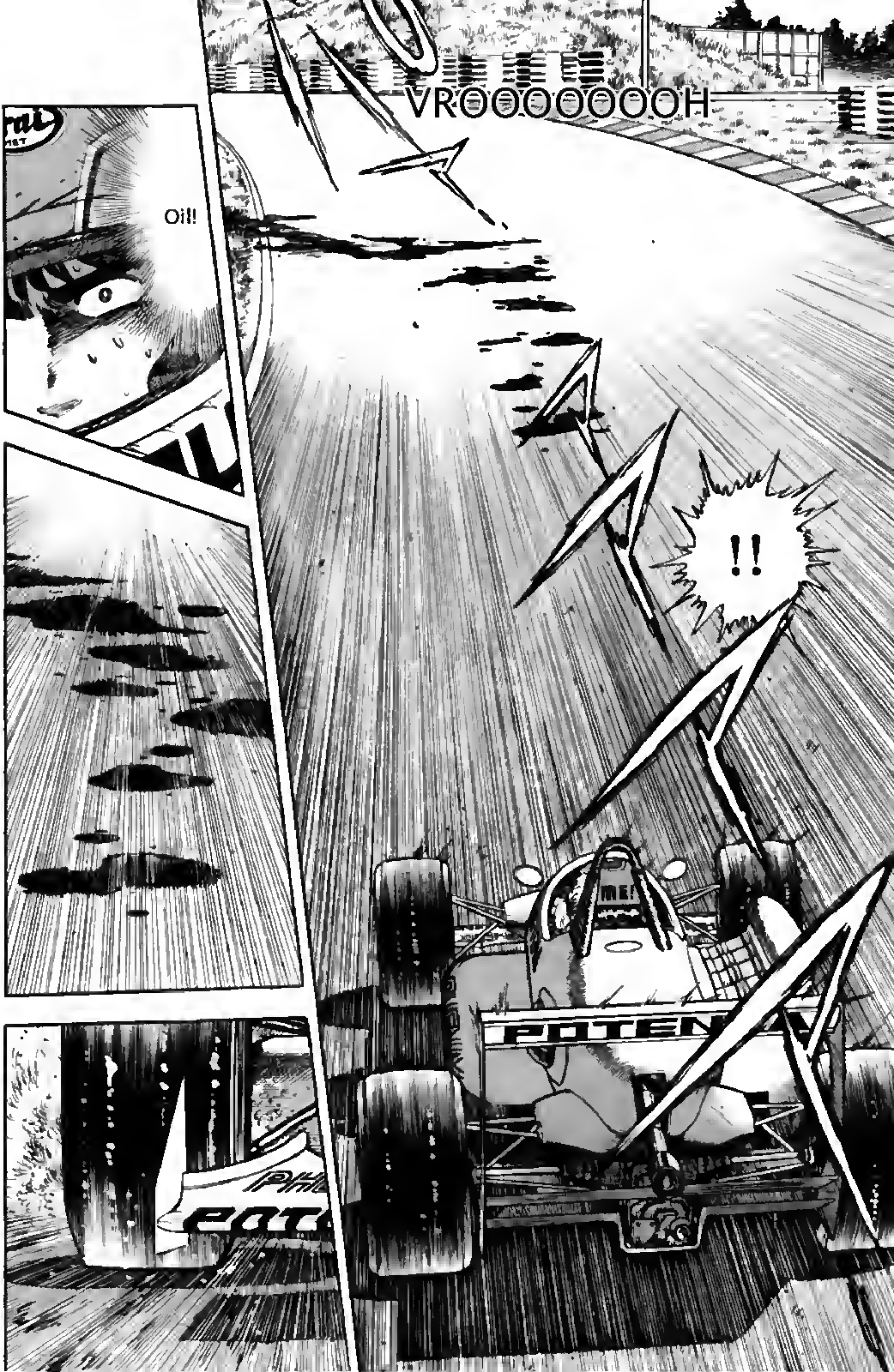
Heh. Maybe he's just all talk.
I'm exhausted ...
Gotta wrap this up quick!
Akagi has passed the reverse bank and gone into the 100R! He's on his way to becoming champion!
VROOOOH

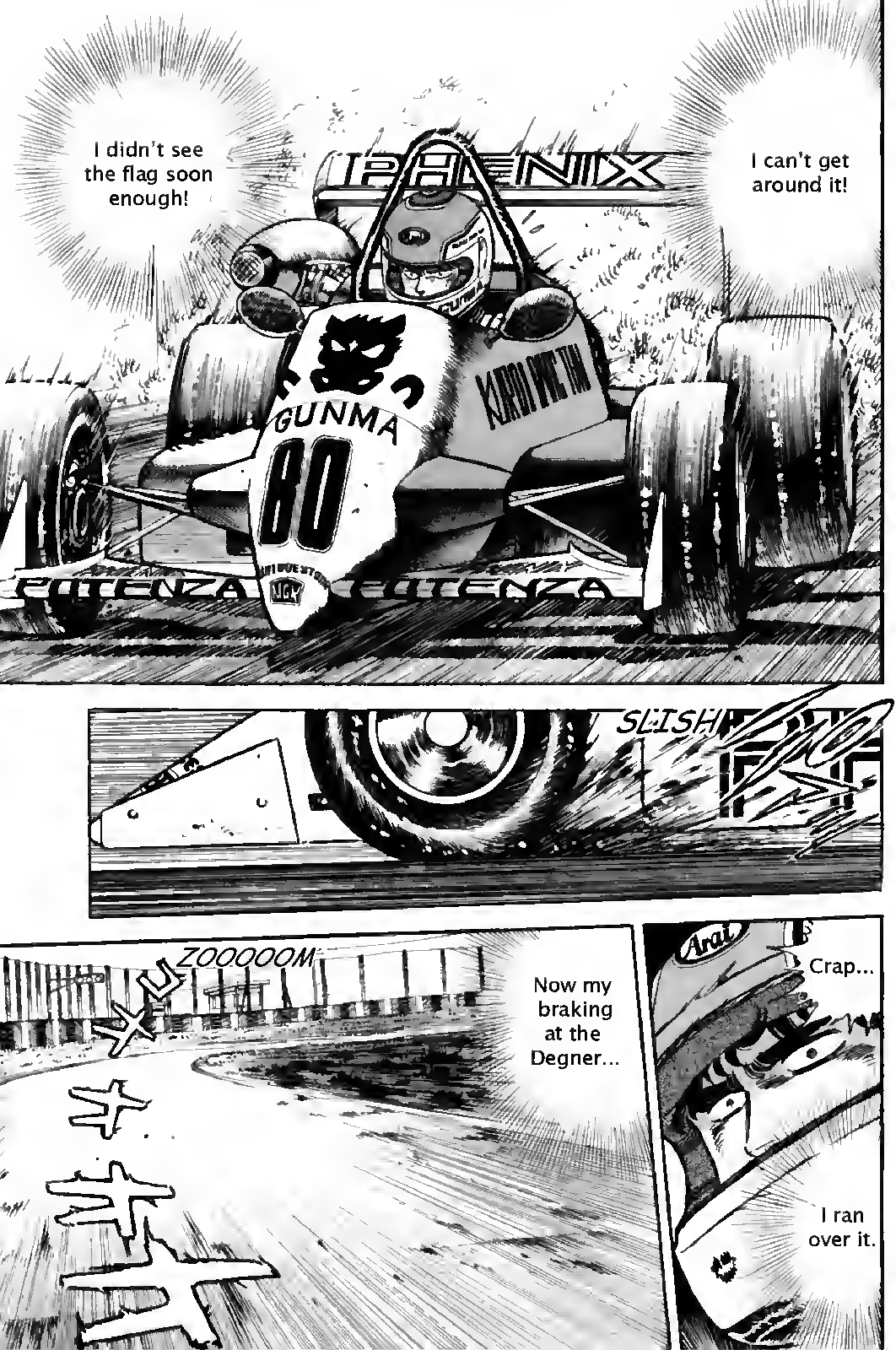

Hm?

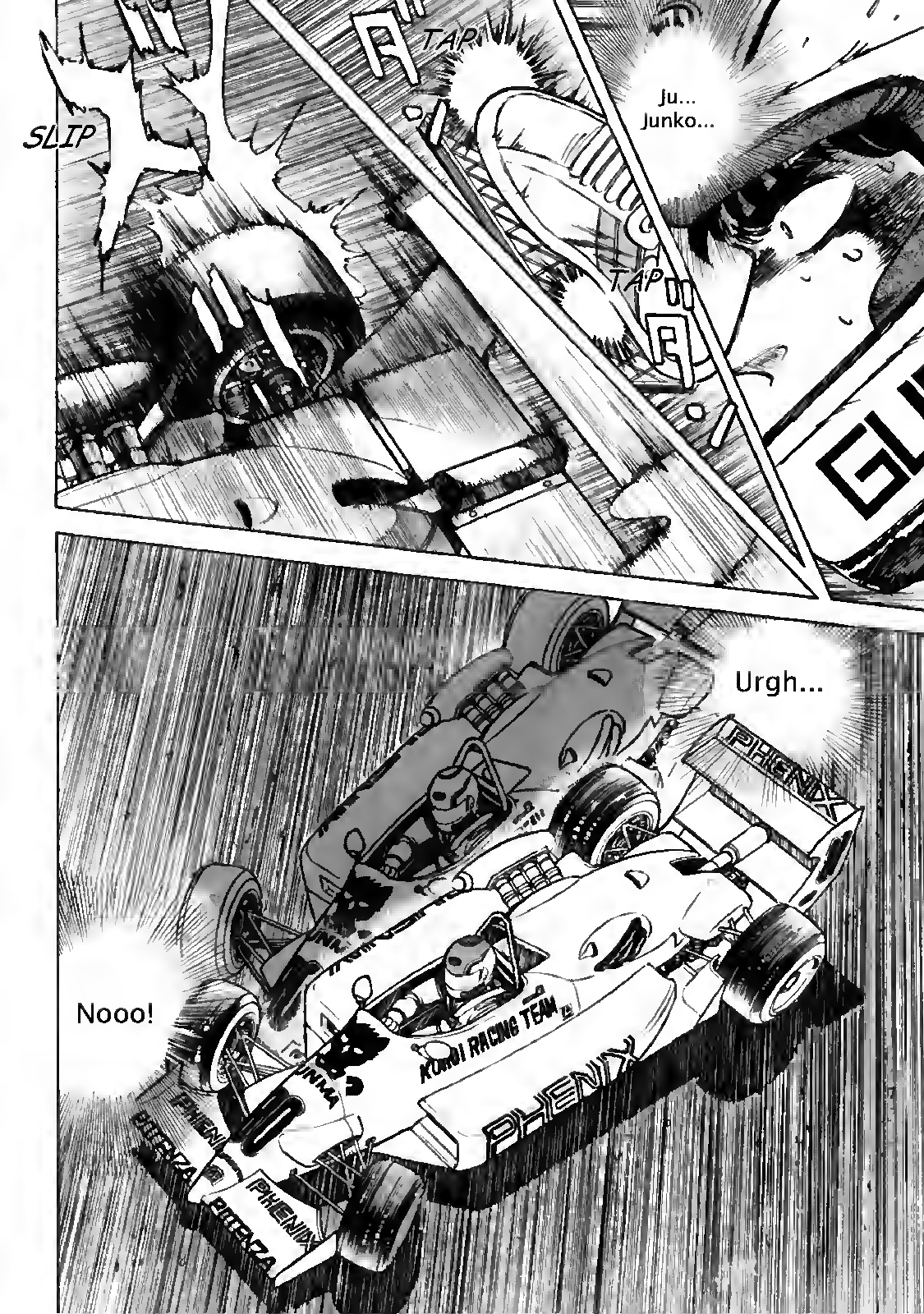

The oil flag?


ZOOOOOM

Chapter 9:
For Next to Nothing


VROOOOOOOH
Oi!!
!!


I didn't see the flag soon enough!
I can't get around it!
PHENIX
GUNMA
80
KUREHA POWER TEAM
ECUENZA
ECUENZA
SLISH
ZOOOOOM
Now my braking at the Degner...
Arai
Crap...
I ran over it.

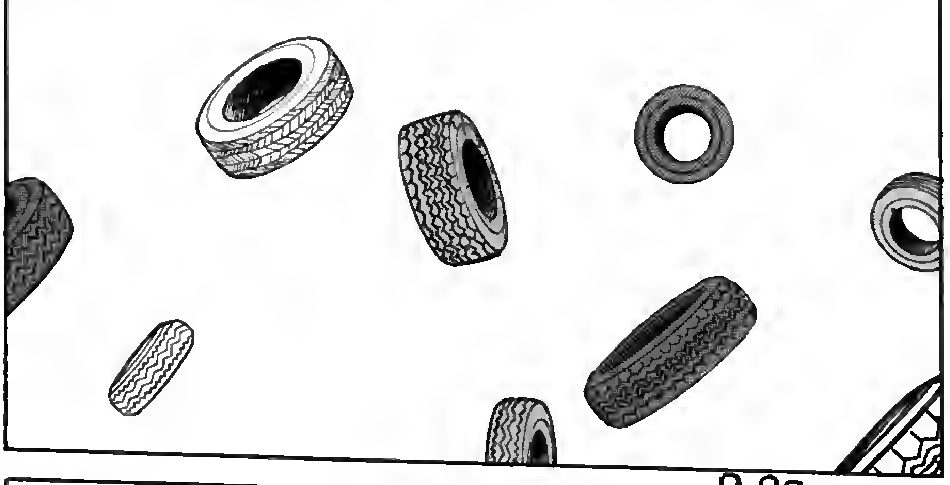

SLIP
TAP
TAP
Ju...
Junko...
Urgh...
Nooo!
PHENIX
KUROI RACING TEAM
PHENIX
PHENIX
PHENIX
PHENIX

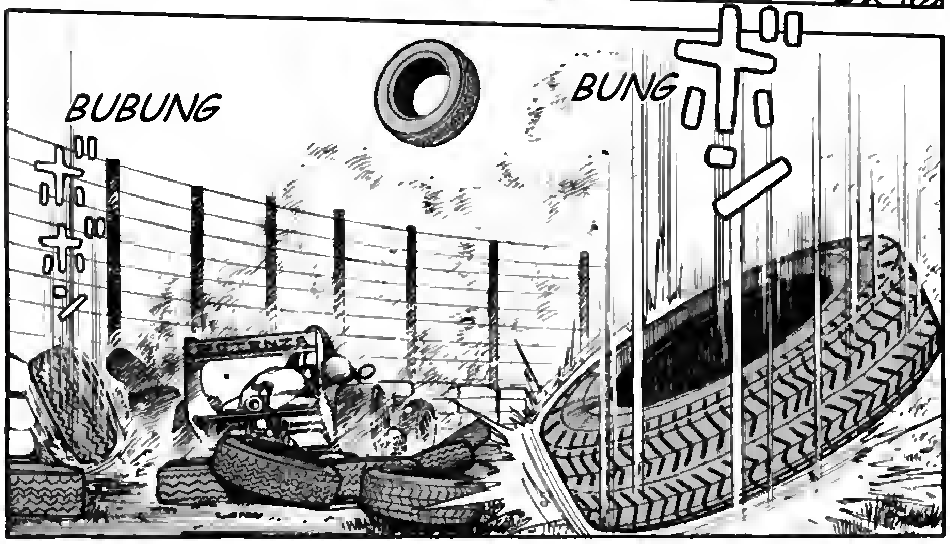
SHWUK SLISHHH
TOYOTA
KUROI RACING TEAM
PHENIX
80
Ayu

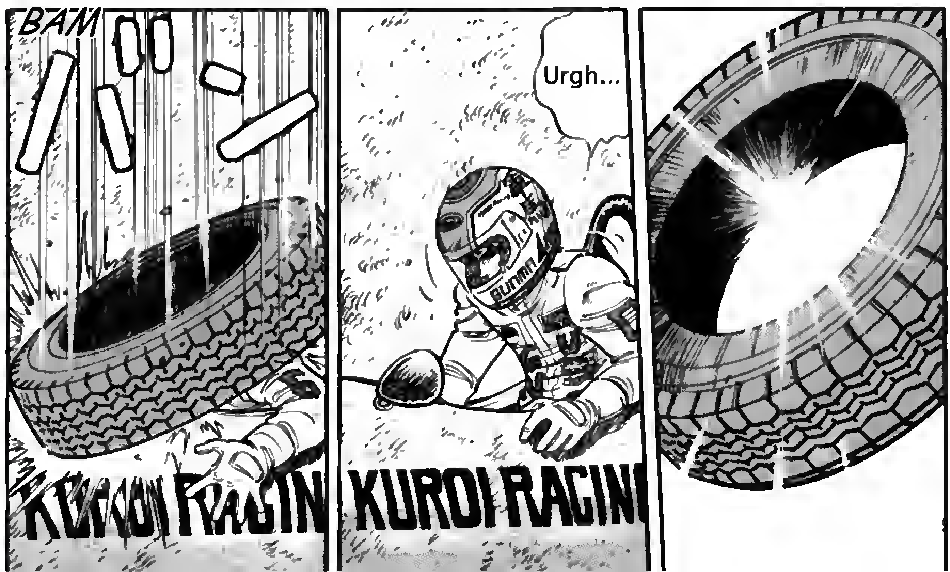
IRRRK
PSHAW PSHAW PSHAW
VWOOSH

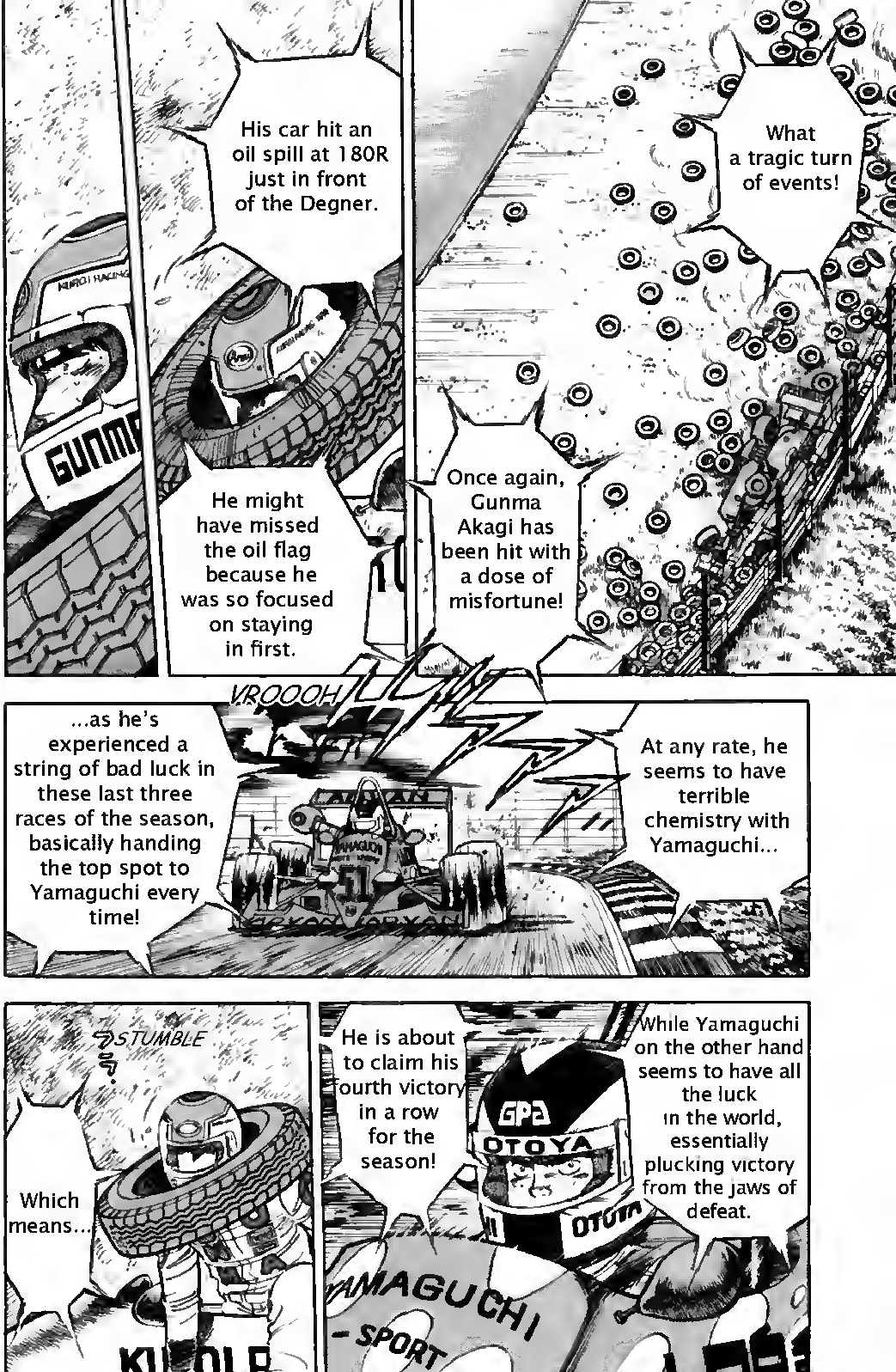
BSHAAAAW
NO!
RACING

Gunma Akagi has had an accident!
MURMUR
KURO
He spun off course at the Degner Curve...
...and smashed into the tire barrier!
...
Gunma ...
Gunma!
Please no...




BUBUNG
BUNG

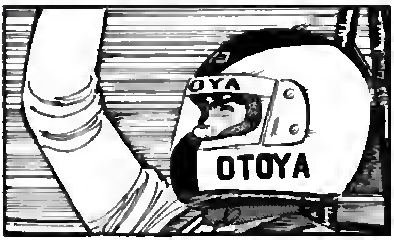

BAM
Urgh...
KUROI RACING
KUROI RACING


His car hit an oil spill at 180R just in front of the Degner.
He might have missed the oil flag because he was so focused on staying in first.
What a tragic turn of events!
Once again, Gunma Akagi has been hit with a dose of misfortune!
...as he's experienced a string of bad luck in these last three races of the season, basically handing the top spot to Yamaguchi every time!
VROOOH
At any rate, he seems to have terrible chemistry with Yamaguchi...
STUMBLE
Which means...
He is about to claim his fourth victory in a row for the season!
While Yamaguchi on the other hand seems to have all the luck in the world, essentially plucking victory from the jaws of defeat.
GPa
OTOYA
YAMAGUCHI
SPORT

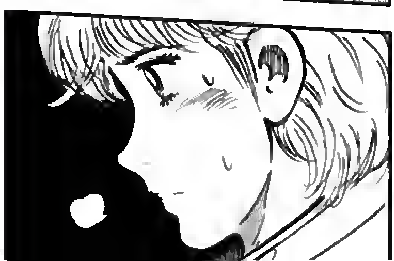
...in just a few more laps...
...Otoya Yamaguchi will claim his title as series champion!
STUMBLE
GUNMA
TOYOTA
I'll take the laurel wreath, 'cause that tire suits you much better!
Ha ha ha ha ha! This is too good!
ZOOOOOOM
BRIDGESTONE

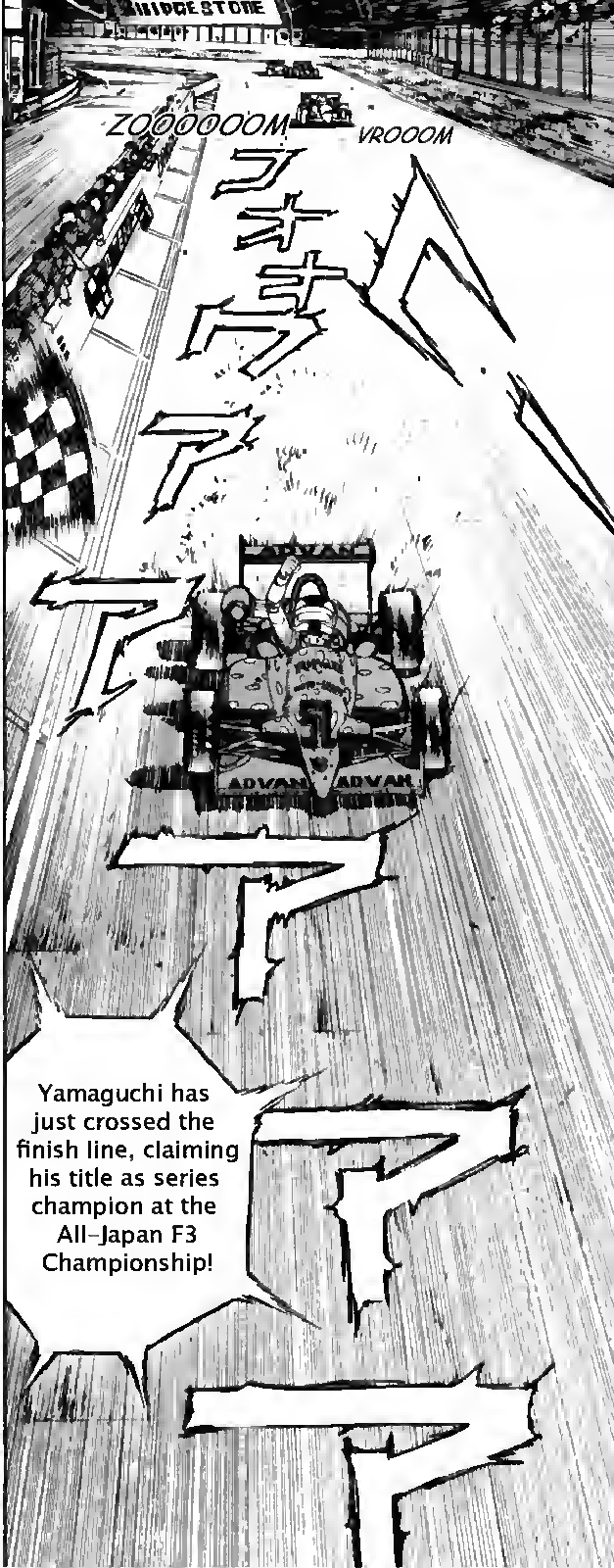
WOW

I've got Lady Luck my side!


OTOYA

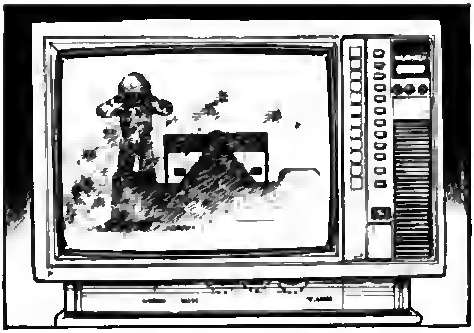
He got out of the car on his own, so he's probably fine.
Is Gunma okay?




BRIDGESTONE
ZOOOOOOM
VROOOM
ADVAN
ADVAN
ADVAN
Yamaguchi has just crossed the finish line, claiming his title as series champion at the All-Japan F3 Championship!

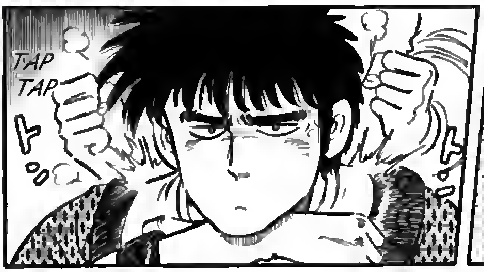
SPLISHHH
Ha ha ha ha!

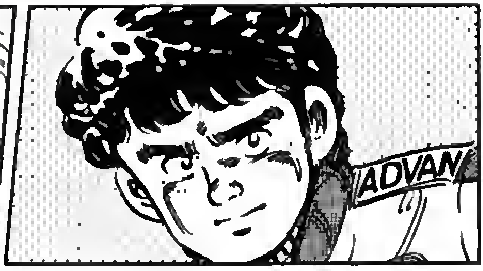
FWIP
Ha ha ha ha ha!
スーパーファイナルラウンド in SUZ
The Ultimate Final Round in Suzuka
A man needs positive thinking to get what he wants in life!
Heh heh... You see now, Yuma?
Maybe you're right.
Positive thinking, huh?

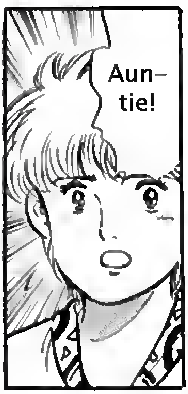


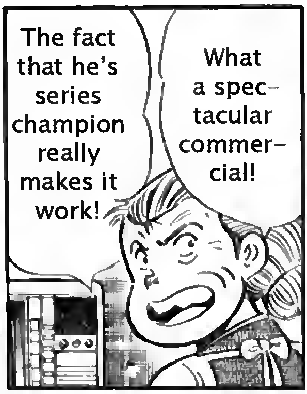
PATTER
PITTER
PITTER

METAMORPH


TAP
TAP


ADVAN


Aun-
tie!


The fact that he's series champion really makes it work!
What a spec-tacular commer-cial!

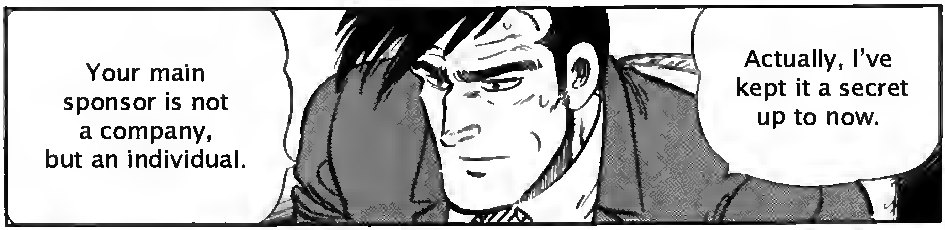
Does it hurt?
No.
TAP
TAP
TAP
TAP

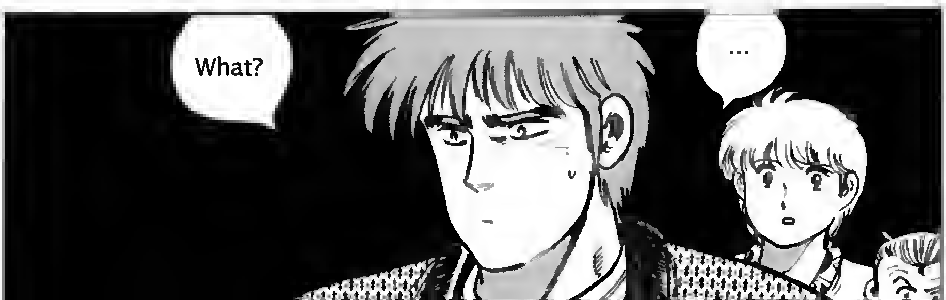
Next year.
Sigh ...
Ha ha ha ha ha!
Well, don't lose hope! There's always next year!
...
It's fine Junko. Granny's right.
CREAK
...
DRIP
ピチャ
DRIP
ピチャ
DRIP
ピチャ
KACHUK
カチャ

KACHUK
Hey, Kuroi. What brings you here at this hour?
How are your wounds?
Hm? Nothin' serious.
?
...
Somethin' wrong? You don't look so good.
Gun-ma...
...you're racing in F3 again next year.
But Otoya ...
...is moving up to F3000, and he sucks.
I know, you're the better racer hands down.
I want you to race F3000 as much as anyone, but when I met with our sponsors, the news was bleak.
Unfortunately, our main sponsor is having some issues.
Apparently unable to offer as much money as before.

That ought to keep you in F3 next year.
But it's nothing to worry about. Yasu's been hard at work, and he found two or three new sponsors.

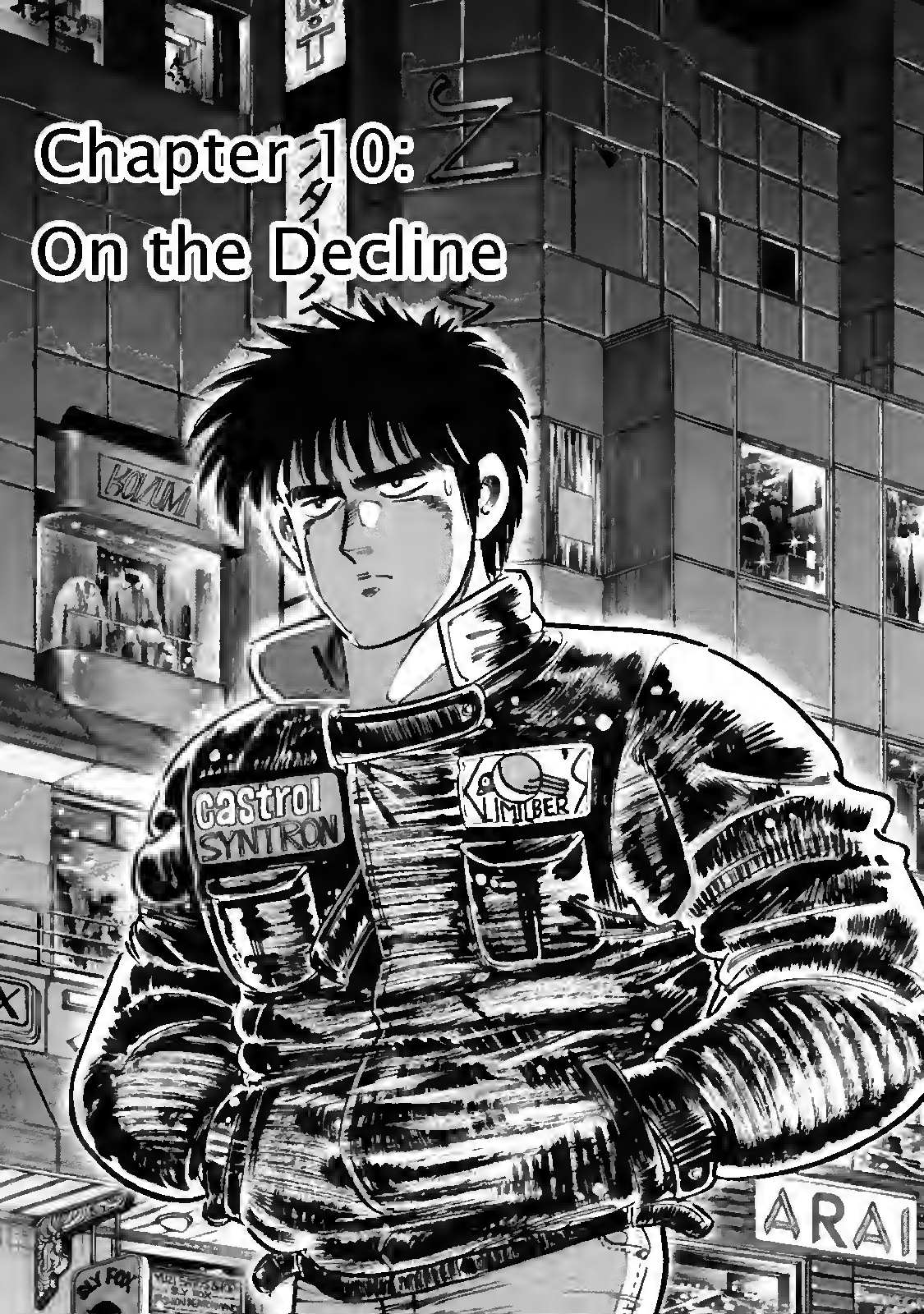
Take it easy!
Hey!
Where's the spon-sor?
Come on, Kuroi!
Where's this "main sponsor" of mine? I wanna negotiate in person!
Tsh!
ガタ
KATUNK


Your main sponsor is not a company, but an individual.
Actually, I've kept it a secret up to now.

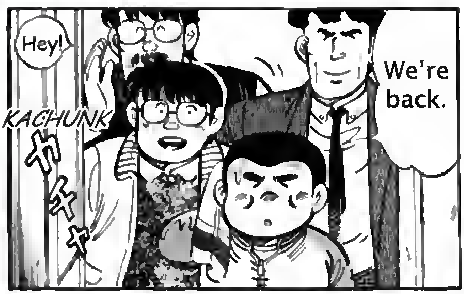

What?
...

Do you know of a woman, by the name of Yuki?
Gun-ma...
So is it some rich dude? Fill me in!
Well hell, that's even better. Makes it easier to get my point across!
12
The one who left home as soon as I did? That Yuki?
The live-in maid, at our place in Gunma Prefecture?
You mean, that Yuki?
Yuki...
Huh?
...!?
She's your main sponsor, Gunma.
Then you two were close.

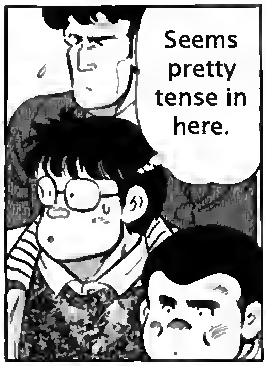
Chapter 10: On the Decline



Hold on.
What did you just say, Kuroi?
小桑荘


Hey!
We're back.
KACHUNK
カチャ

Yuki... That Yuki...
...is my main sponsor!?


Seems pretty tense in here.

Huh?

When we met for the first time.
Remember back two years ago.
You ain't makin' any sense!
You gotta be kidding.
And then I mentioned...
Right.
Of course. You showed up outta nowhere and asked if I wanted to race in F3.
...working at that shop... Morioka Motors, remember?
You were still an FJ racer...
And that, there was a bit of an angle.
...that I couldn't tell you why I chose you.
!
I don't believe Yuki's my main sponsor!
I don't believe you.
I...

I know, right? She ain't got that kinda...
Where could she get all that money?
How can that be?
Y...Yuki is your main sponsor?
Ha ha ha. I don't need to get married anyway. He'll just take care of me for the rest of my life...
So you didn't know... that I'm Shoma's mistress...
What is it, Gunma?
...
...
Shoma...
Can't do it. She never gave us her contact info.
Kuroi, take me to see Yuki.

...
She even paid all her sponsor fees in cash, to be very discreet, so all we can do is sit back and wait for her periodic phone call.
Address, phone number, it's all secret.
...
What's this all about?
Gun-ma...
SLAM
I gotta use the phone!
How do I put it ...
Umm...
Tamotsu? Who's Yuki?
...
...
Was she his girl-friend?
Really nice girl.
She was a maid at Gunma's old place.
I dunno if I'd say that.

You've reached the Akagi Residence.
Why, Master Gunma! It's been quite some time!
RRRRRING
Hello?
...
Hello?
Yeah, I know she lives in an apartment somewhere in Takasaki. What's that phone number?
Yuki's phone number?
Excuse me?
Running a boutique in the Azabu area from what I've heard.
I don't know the details, but I'm fairly sure she's living in Tokyo now.
I'm awfully sorry, Master Gunma. I just don't know it, I really don't.
But I imagine she's moved on from that place.
Regret-fully, I just don't know.
What's the number there?
A bouti-que?

That money's coming from Shoma.
If Kuroi's tellin' the truth...
GLICK
Which means...
But Shoma would never provide money for my sake.
Azabu huh?
...
What are you doing!?
Who are you people!?
SHIZUKA

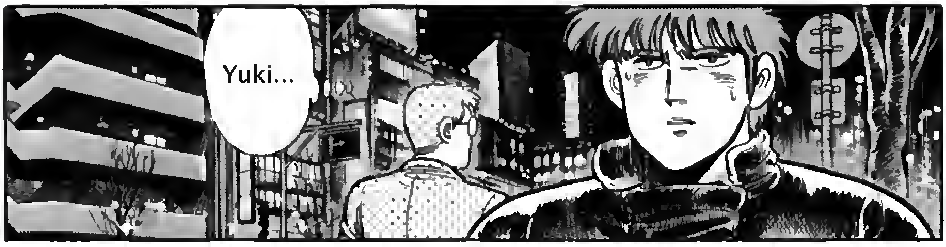
This is the place, right? The shop's name is written right here.
Please stop! These are business hours!
Didn't you get the memo?
Just doing our job, lady.
YUK
But... but I...
Take a look, it's all spelled out in black and white here, signatures and all.
Weird, we were ordered to take this place down by the owner, T. K. Mode.
Akagi Industries? You mean... "the" Akagi Industries?
That's right.
Of course not! It's true a company called T. K. Mode owns this shop, but...
...that's only a subsidiary of Akagi Industries, which should really be in charge.
I'm gonna have to ask you to wait. I'll go check into this!
You sayin' this paper's a fake, lady?

BRRRRRRING
The direct number is...
So I'm gonna give them a call and straighten this out.
BRRRRRRING
BRRRRRRING
Hello? It's Yuki!
KACHUK
It had to be done. Since you spent hundreds of millions of yen on God knows what...
...we had to completely sever ties with T. K. Mode.
Don't get so worked up. Yes... I know...

So just go back to the apartment and sit tight for a while.
T. K. Mode was threatening a lawsuit against you, but I paid them off to forget about it.
I'm doing this all for you.
So then...
...what'll happen to me?
...!
Consider my feelings every once in a while!
You idiot! Don't you realize how much I love you!? I'd never let them sue you!
Which of us would that effect more? Think scandal.
I don't care if I get sued.
Please Yuki. You've got to understand how much I need you.
...
CLICK
Anyway, I'll be over tonight. We can talk about it then.
Fine.
So it's all sorted out, right? We'll get started now.

Yeah, it's Shoma.
I took care of it.
BOOP
BOOP
BOOP
If Yuki does something rash, things could get pretty bad.
Tonight won't work.
Uh-huh. There's a party at Ayako's house, and you should come. A lot of big names will be there.
She put up a little fight and said she didn't mind if she's sued, but it worked out.
Tonight?
You've got nothing to worry about!
Leave that girl to me!
So we'll be waiting... Oh, and Ayako loves roses, so bring her a bouquet to make her swoon. Heh heh heh.
Is that clear? You're home free!
All right.
CLICK

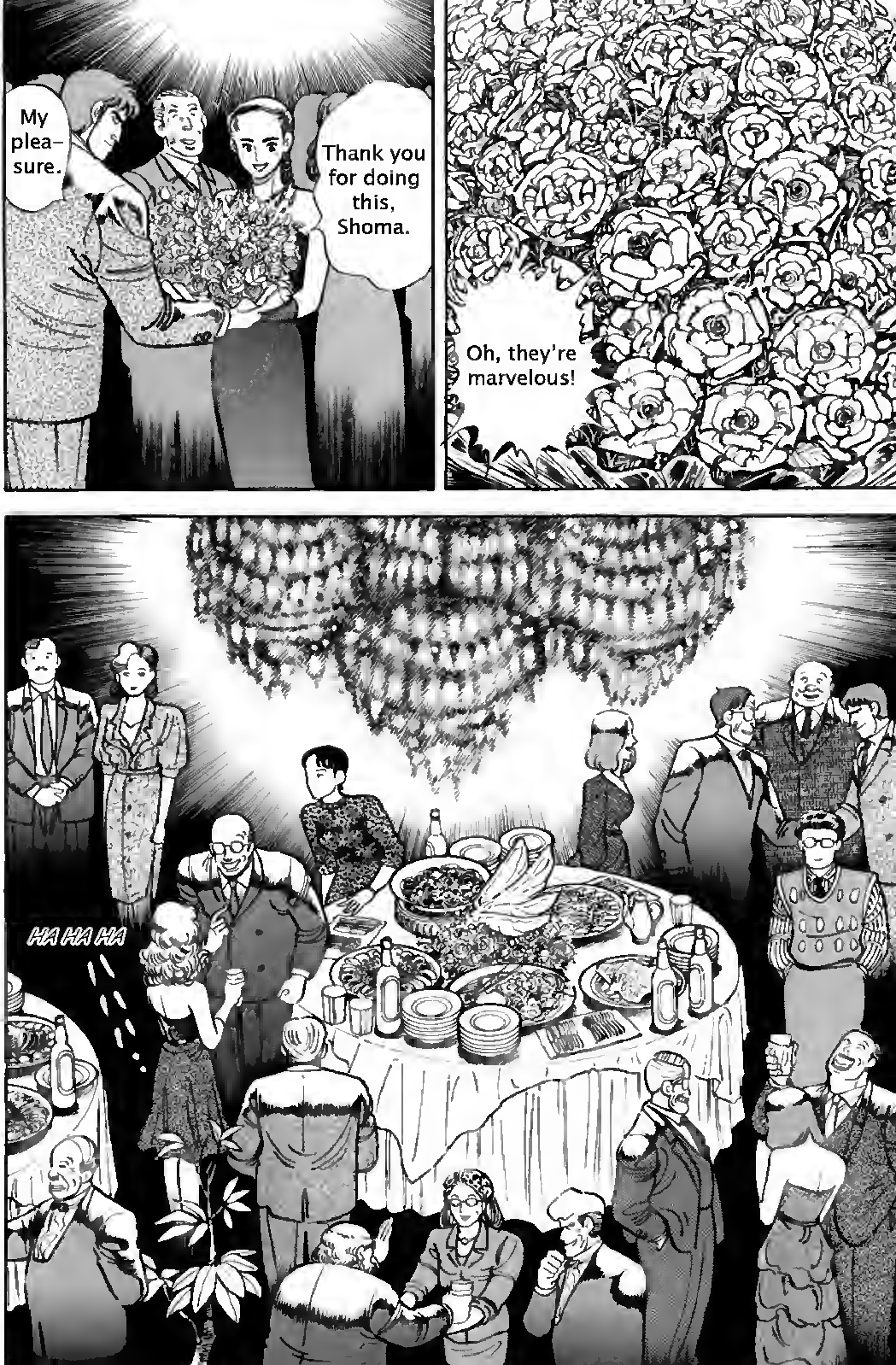
HONK HONK
パアアン


Yuki...

I don't believe this!
JIN
ASAHI

So every-thing I've achieved up to now...
...is all thanks to you.

Oh, I'm sorry.
Ouch! Watch where yer goin', dude!
THUNK
Outta the way!
I'm gonna search every last boutique in Azabu till I find her!
Man...
Where are you, Yuki?


My pleasure.
Thank you for doing this, Shoma.
Oh, they're marvelous!
HA HA HA

!?
You're going on a drive with Ayako.
Nosense, Shoma.
I'm terribly sorry, but I'll have to bow out early tonight.
Uncle Tatsu ...
But I...
I've already got her hopes up about this late-night drive with you. She's looking forward to it.
Are you worrying about that girl again?
I told you I'd take care of it.
Or do you intend to let that girl blackmail you for the rest of your life? Just to keep a scandal from surfacing?
No, it's not that, but...
If Yuki does something rash, it could hurt my father in the polls.

Sho-
ma.
!?
You have nothing to worry about.
I've already got a man on the job.
And even more sexy than before!
My goodness, you changed already?
Stop it, Uncle!
I've al-
ready
got
a man
on the
job.
SMACK
Get going. And show Ayako you're a man tonight!

DRIP
DRIP
ピチョン…

But Gunma doesn't need me anymore. He's made a name for himself.
Now I've lost my job.

What do I have to live for now?
So my mission is done.

But at least he loves me.
He's a jerk.
Sho-ma?
KACHUK
I just can't bear to be so lonely.
...maybe I should be a little nicer.
Even though I've always hated him...
Sho...
!?
KACHUK

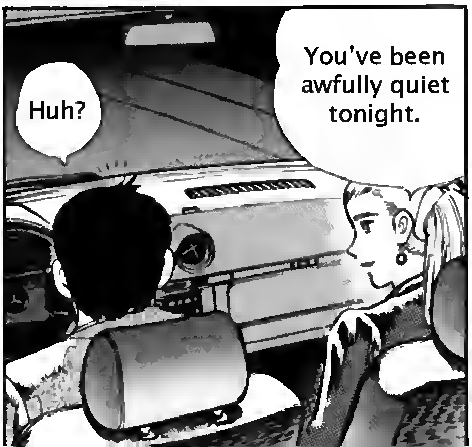
Chapter 11: Fatal Mistake

VRRRRR
H'OOO

...

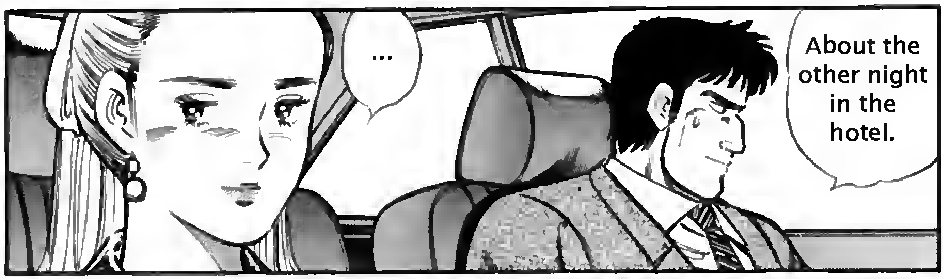
What does he mean?
Leave her to me! I've already got a man on the job.
Are you worrying about that girl again?

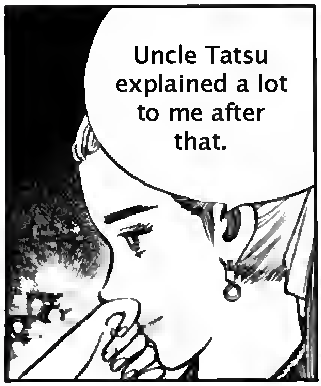
Oh, sorry. I'm just a little concerned about some work-related matters.


Huh?
You've been awfully quiet tonight.

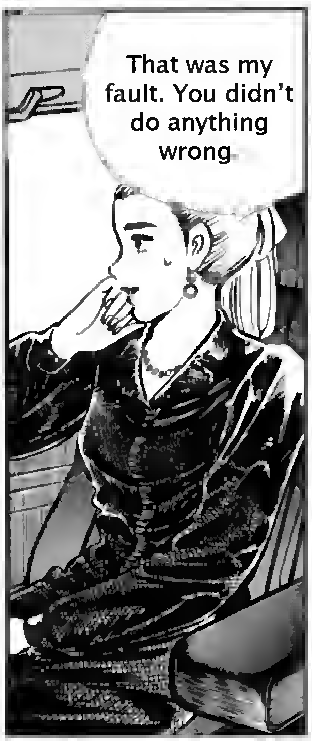
How to apologize to you.
I mean, actually there's one other thing I was thinking about.

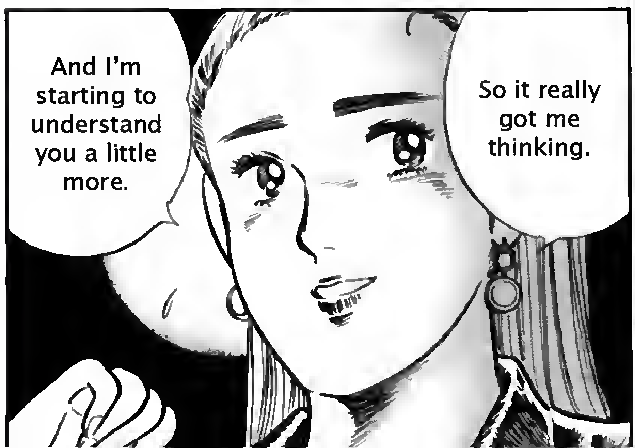
Really?


...
About the other night in the hotel.


Uncle Tatsu explained a lot to me after that.

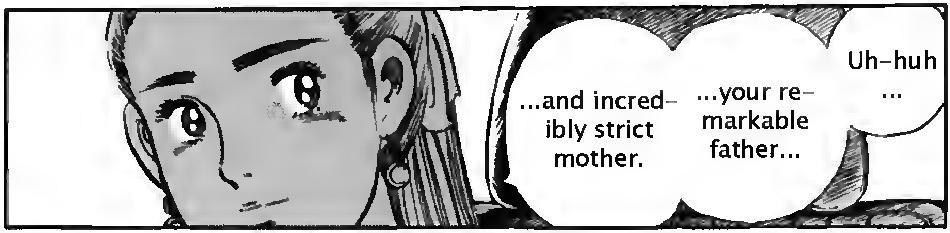
That's not true. I love you, but I just couldn't...

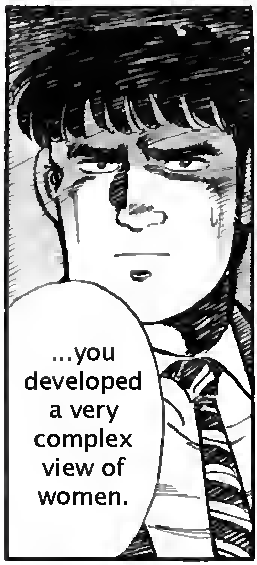

That was my fault. You didn't do anything wrong.

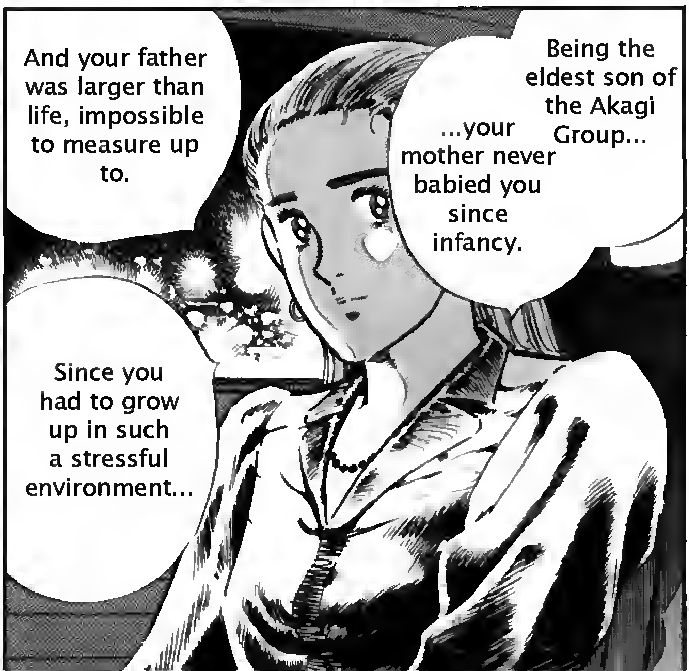

And I'm starting to understand you a little more.
So it really got me thinking.

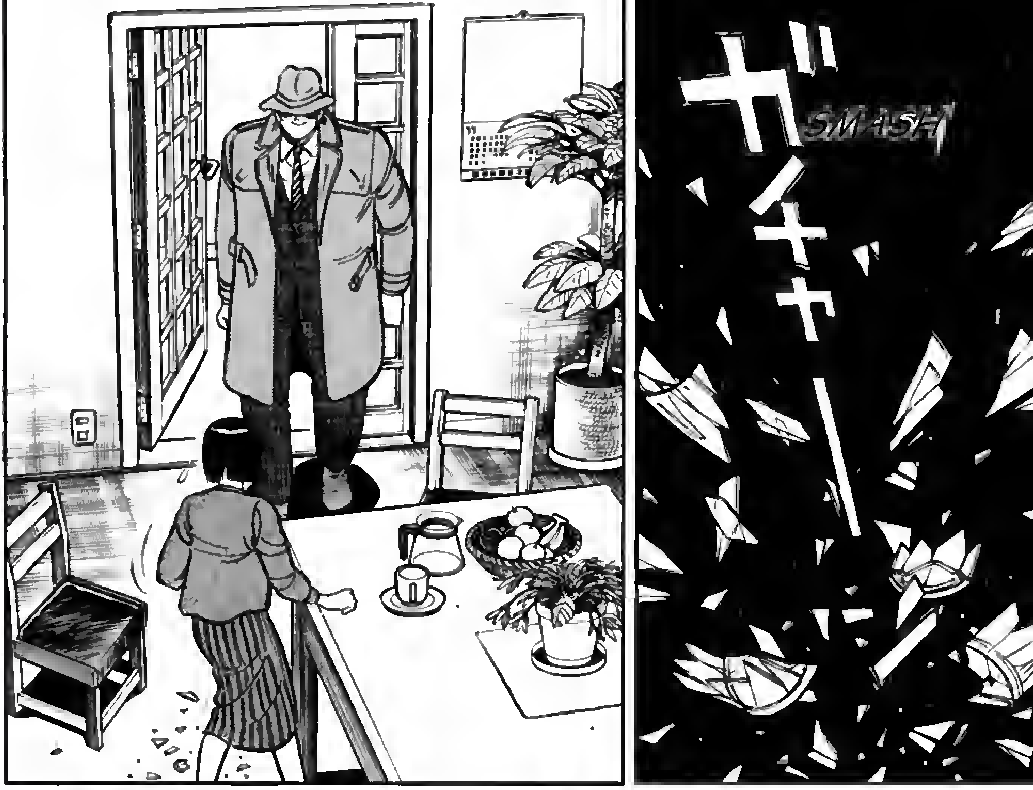
He talked about your mother and father.
What did Uncle Tatsu say about me?

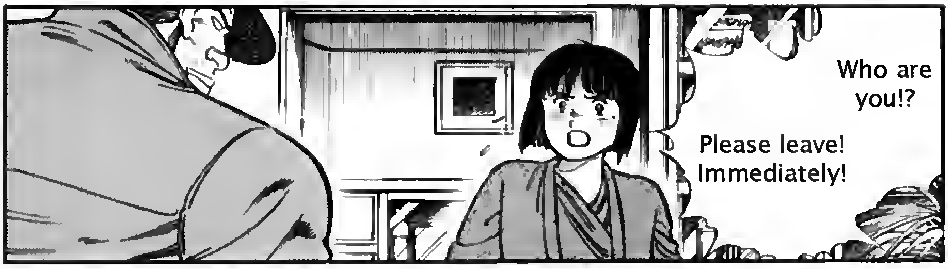
Really?
!?


Uh-huh ...
...your remarkable father...
...and incredibly strict mother.


...you developed a very complex view of women.


Being the eldest son of the Akagi Group...
...your mother never babied you since infancy.
And your father was larger than life, impossible to measure up to.
Since you had to grow up in such a stressful environment...


ガイキャー
SMASH


Who are you!?
Please leave! Immediately!

Shoma sent me here.
If you don't get out I'll call the police!
You oughta be more careful.
Your door was unlocked.

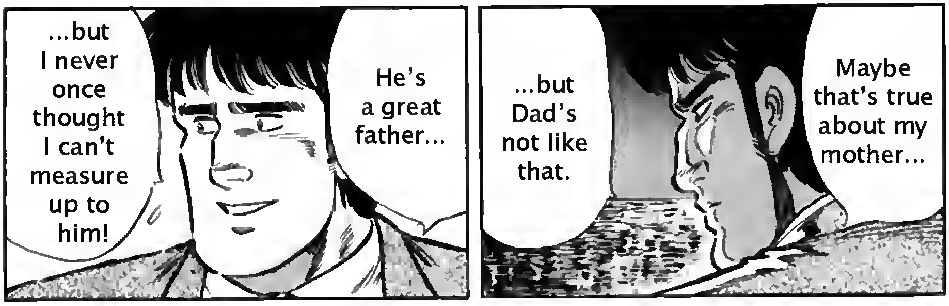
Isn't that awful?
He hired me to rape you.
SHOOM
!?
But I don't like this at all.
Believe whatever you want.
He paid me to do the job.
No way.
...
Nice and hot.
Can I get a cup of coffee?
...
I'll drink it down and be on my way. I hate this kind of job, you know.
Come on, I just want a cup of coffee.
I'll just take the money and scram.
Get out of here!
Get ...

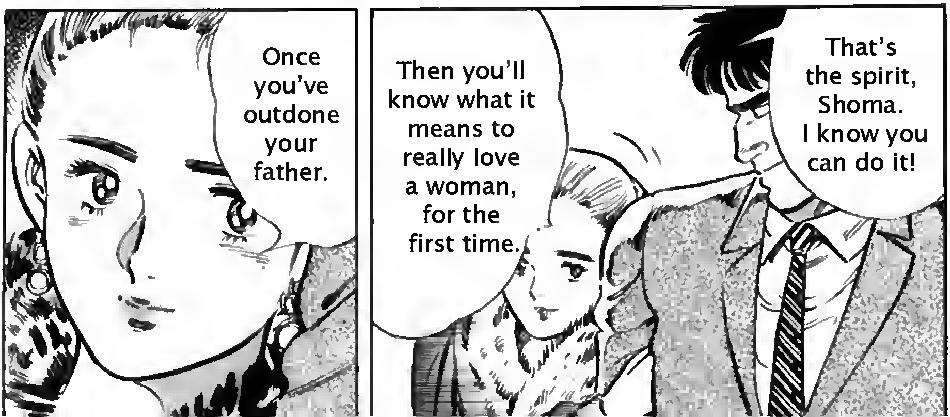
It's awful how you're being treated.
He forced you to be his girl at first, didn't he.
Made you devote your life to him...
...then got engaged to another woman and dumped you.
Cream?
Yes please.
What a filthy, filthy man.
And to think he has the nerve to pay off a thug like me to have my way with you.
...
SLURP
Please just drink it and go.
Great.
I can't get arrested for sexual assault if you treat me like that.
Heh heh... You don't lock your door, you let a man into your room and give him coffee.

SWIFF
!?
PATUNK
I really don't enjoy this kind of work.
I'm sorry.
THUNK

ZOOOOOOO—

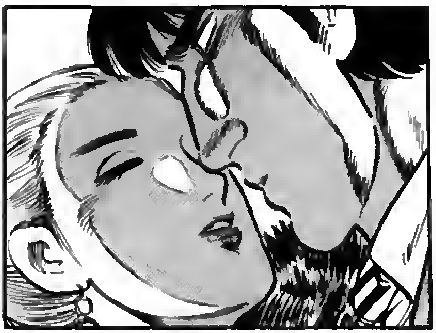
Uncle Tatsu oughta be a shrink.
A strict mother, and a father I can never measure up to.


...but I never once thought I can't measure up to him!
He's a great father...
...but Dad's not like that.
Maybe that's true about my mother...


Once you've outdone your father.
Then you'll know what it means to really love a woman, for the first time.
That's the spirit, Shoma. I know you can do it!

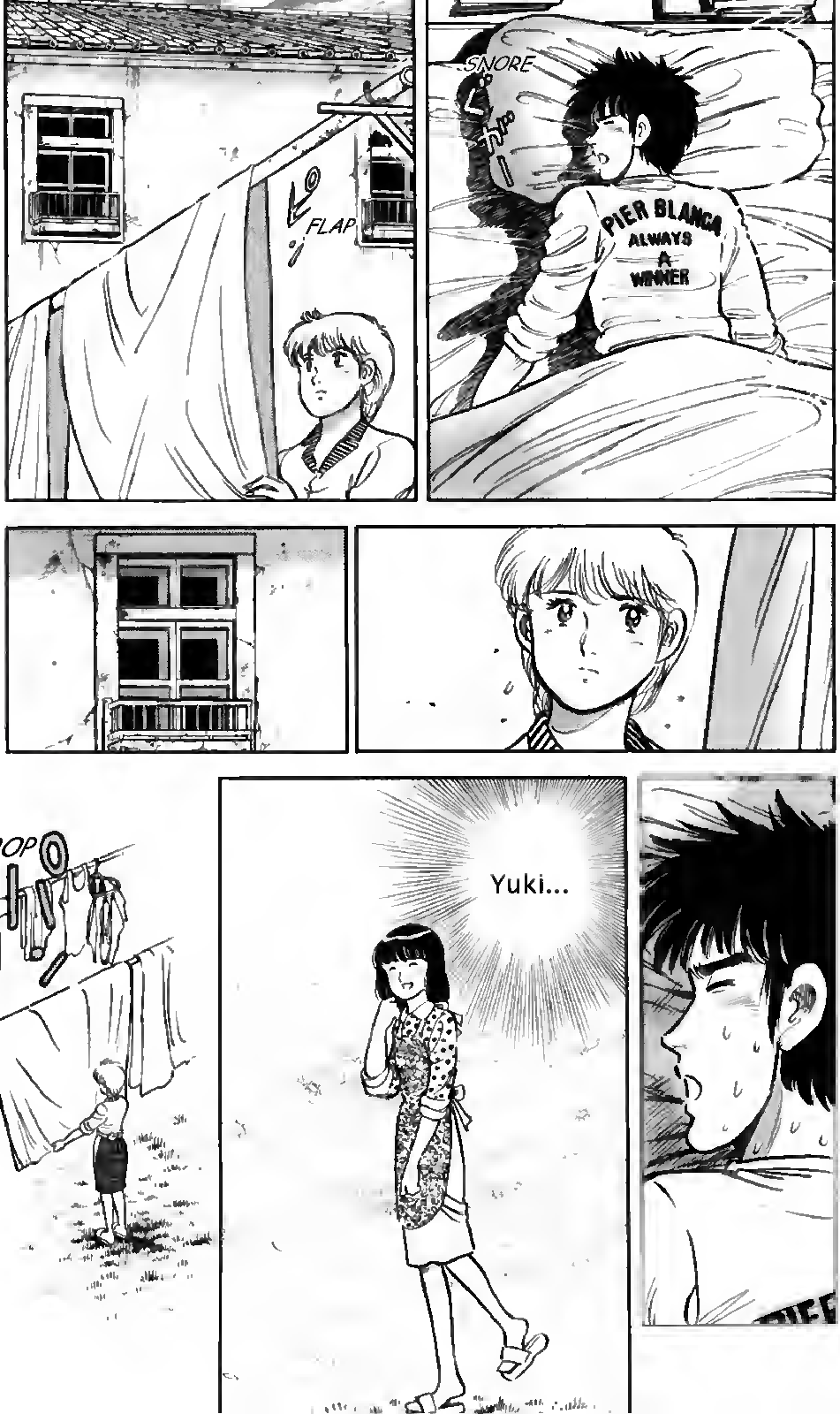
Ahh
CLATTER
CLATTER
CLATTER
CRASH
Ugh
Huff
Huff
Huff
RATTLE
RATTLE
Ugh
THUNK

CLATTER
THUNK
Huff
Huff

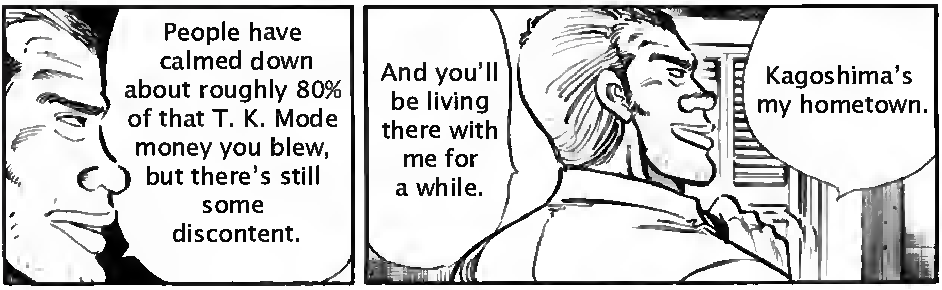


I'll outdo my father.
I swear I will.

Desperately searching all the boutiques in Azabu just to find that Yuki.
Oh, that Gunma...He was wandering the streets all night.
She was paying money in secret, just to keep Gunma behind the wheel.
...
CLANK!!
CLINK
HM?
What determination.
Off to do the laundry!
Where do you think you're going, Junko?
Hmph, she's pretending not to care!
KACHUK
God knows what he plans to do once he finds her.
He must be such a mess right now, looking for his old girlfriend.
Dishes are done!


FLAP
SNORE
PIER BLANCA
ALWAYS
A
WINNER
FLOOP
Yuki...

...
I'm getting you out of Tokyo.
Get ready for a trip.


People have calmed down about roughly 80% of that T. K. Mode money you blew, but there's still some discontent.
And you'll be living there with me for a while.
Kagoshima's my hometown.

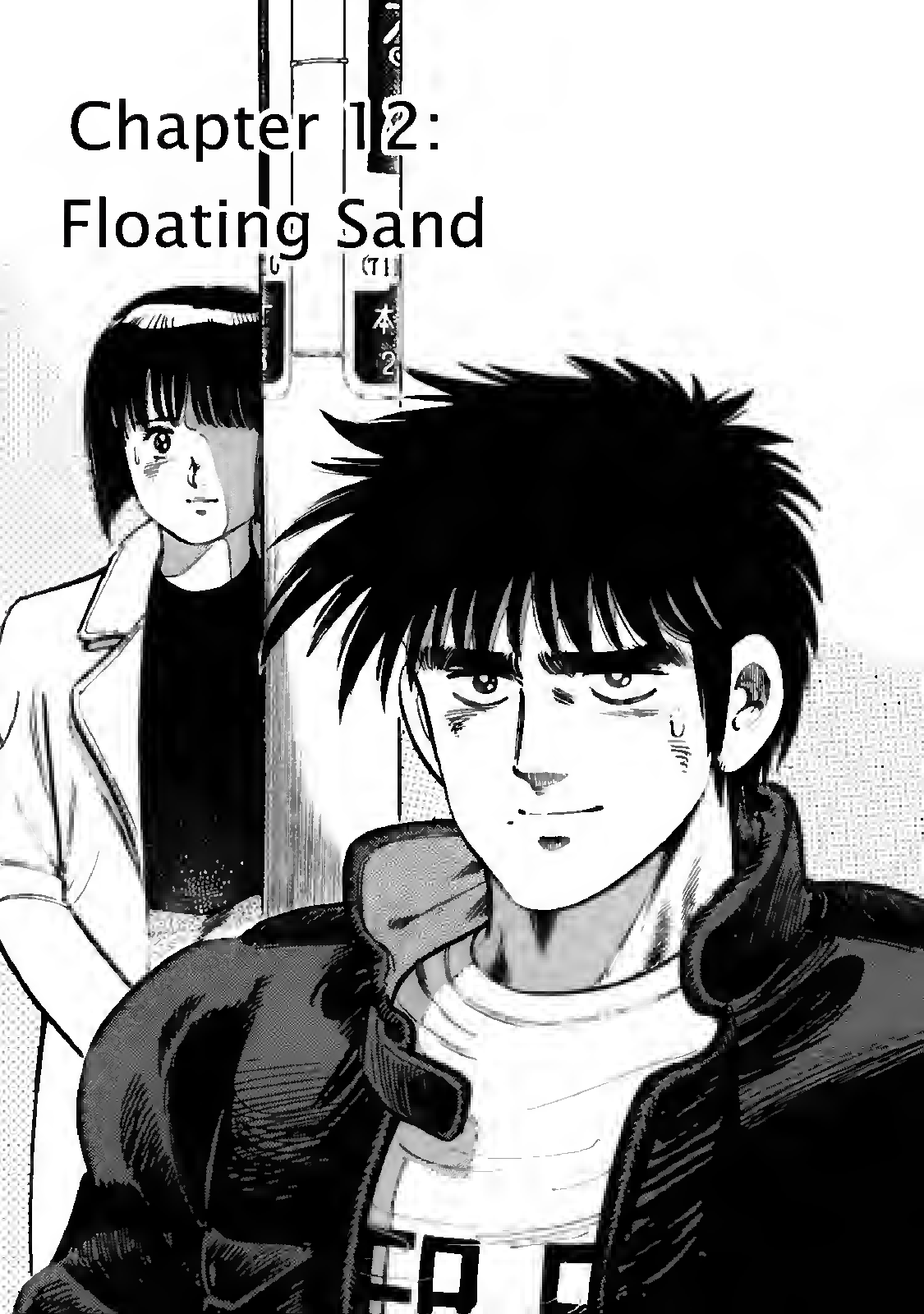
A lot of big names at that office are pretty steamed at President Akagi's nepotism, so your existence is making things tense.
Complaints are surfacing in the Akagi Main Office about the remaining 20%.

Now move your ass!
I'll take real good care of you.
That's right. Think of me as your minder-slash-husband for the time being.
First you rape me, and now you're acting like a bossy husband?
You can't be serious.

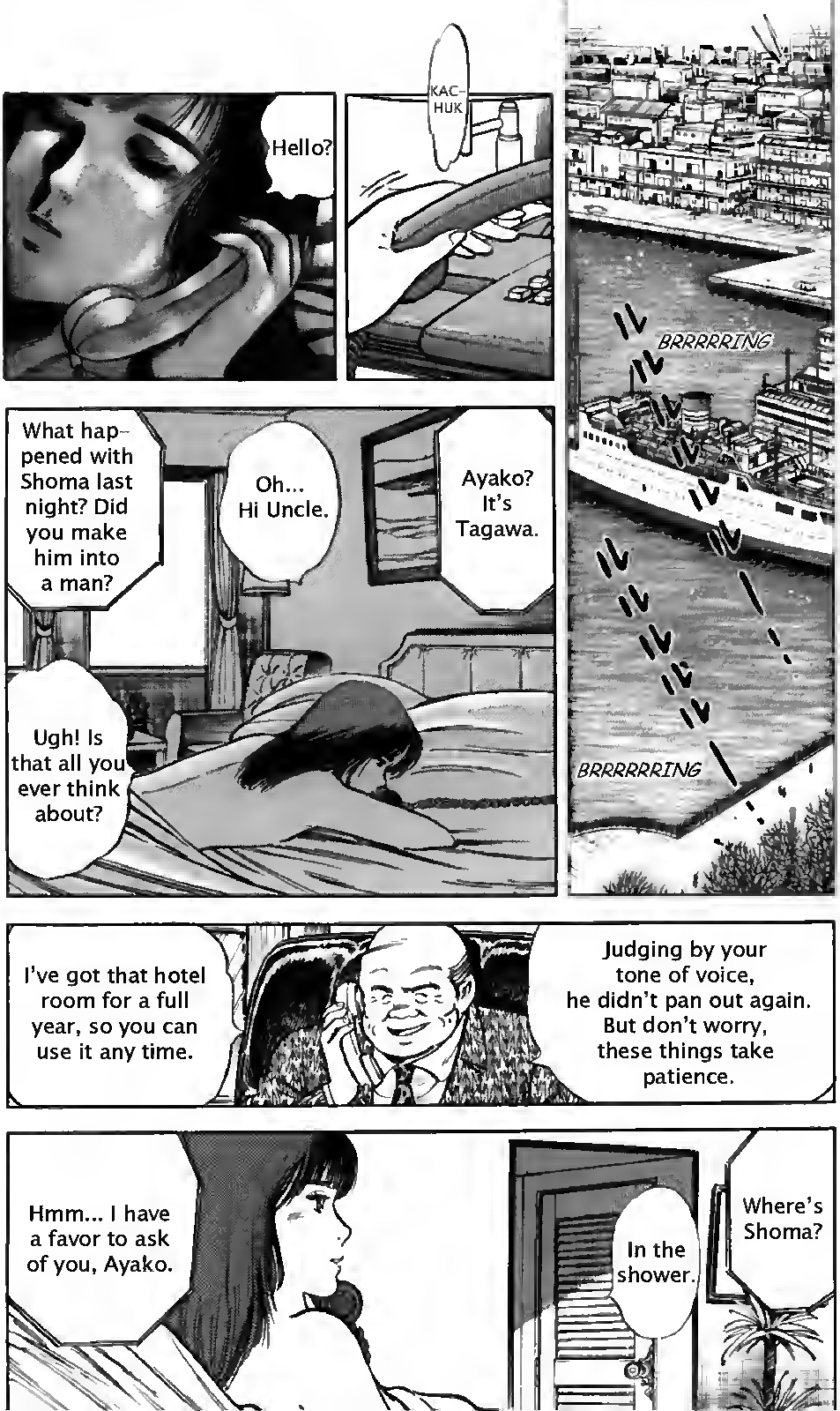
Taxi!
Or I'll send you on a trip much further "south" than Kagoshima.
Don't even think about trying to run.
Get in.
IRRK
キィイ・・・
FWOOP
カチ
CLICK

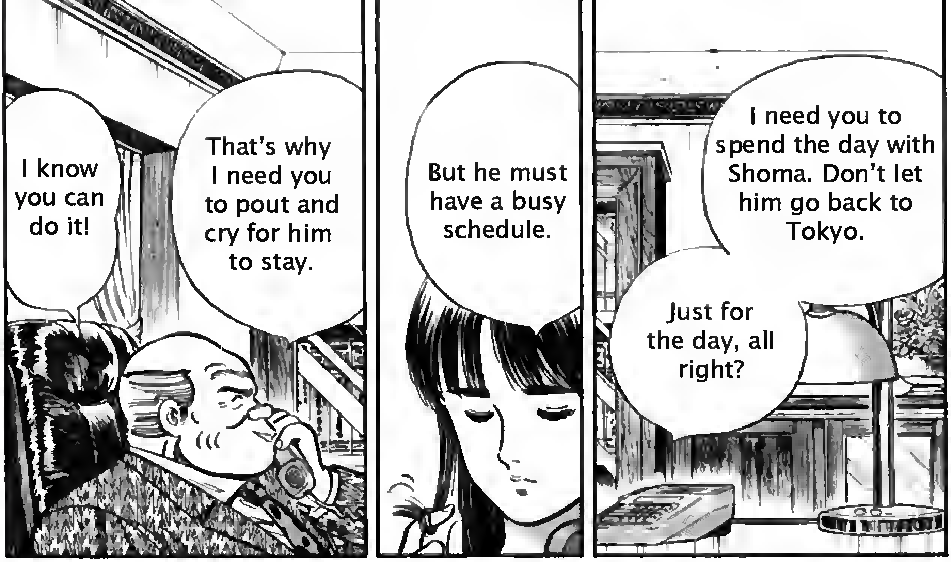
KADO TAXI
Go! Please go! Hurry!
!!
SLAM
Dammit...
VRRRR!!
Hey! Get back here!
Huff
Huff
Huff
Huff
That little bitch...
Sigh ...

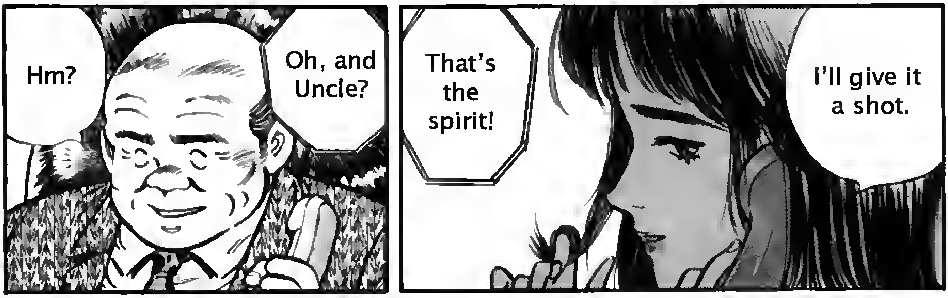
Chapter 12: Floating Sand



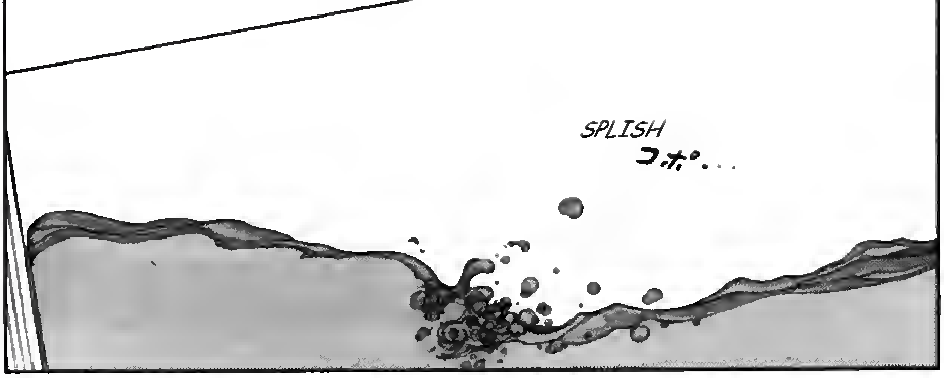
You imbecile!
I'm sorry. She caught me off guard for a second.
What!? You let her get away!?
Tagawa Food Co., Ltd.
田川食品株式会社
Yes, sir.
And don't blow it this time!
Go find her! If she gets away it fouls up our entire plan!
He's probably still with Ayako.
Dammit. She might be trying to get in touch with Shoma.
CLICK

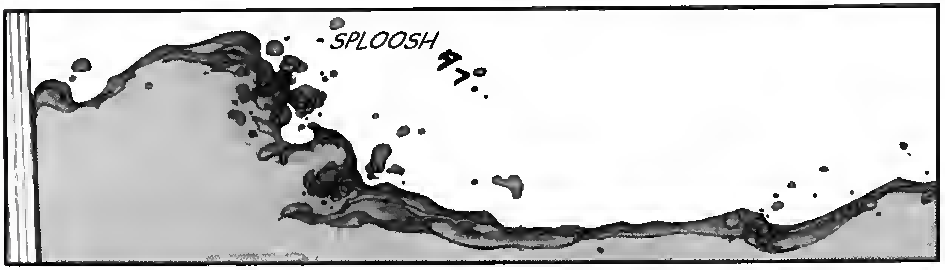

Hello?
KAC-HUK
BRRRRRING
BRRRRRRING
What hap-pened with Shoma last night? Did you make him into a man?
Oh... Hi Uncle.
Ayako? It's Tagawa.
Ugh! Is that all you ever think about?
I've got that hotel room for a full year, so you can use it any time.
Judging by your tone of voice, he didn't pan out again. But don't worry, these things take patience.
Hmm... I have a favor to ask of you, Ayako.
In the shower.
Where's Shoma?


I know you can do it!
That's why I need you to pout and cry for him to stay.
But he must have a busy schedule.
I need you to spend the day with Shoma. Don't let him go back to Tokyo.
Just for the day, all right?


Hm?
Oh, and Uncle?
That's the spirit!
I'll give it a shot.

So he finally found his manhood! Ha ha ha!
Is that right!?
はっはっはっはっはっはっはっはっ
HA HA HA HA HA HA
That's great news! Great news!
That's why we're still in bed.
Shoma was an animal last night.


SPLISH
ｺﾎﾟ...


SPLOOSH
ﾀﾗｰ

VOXC

Where should I go...

What should I do next...

You idiot! Don't you realize how much I love you!? I'd never let them sue you!
Consider my feelings every once in a while!
You've got to understand how much I need you.
He hired me to rape you.
Shoma sent me here.
What did you blow that money on!?
Out with it!
It's awful how you're being treated.
So it's all sorted out, right? We'll get started now.
Made you devote your life to him, then got engaged to another woman and dumped you.
And what about what you've done? You took my life from me! Isn't that a crime!?
What you're doing is embezzlement. That's a crime.

He hired me to rape you.
Shoma sent me here.
What did you blow that money on!?
Out with it!
What you're doing is embezzlement. That's a crime.
And what about what you've done? You took my life from me! Isn't that a crime!?

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You've got to understand how much I need you.
It's awful how you're being treated.
So it's all sorted out, right? We'll get started now.
Made you devote your life to him, then got engaged to another woman and dumped you.

Huff
Huff
Huff
Huff
Huff
Yuki...
THUNK
Huff
Huff
Huff
THUNK
THUNK
THUNK
Gunma...
SHLOOP
Come with me to Tokyo, Yuki!
PSHOOT
I wanna see you!
Gunma ...

I wanna see you!

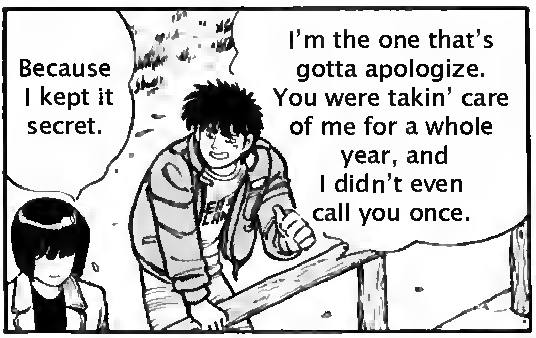
...
...?
STAR

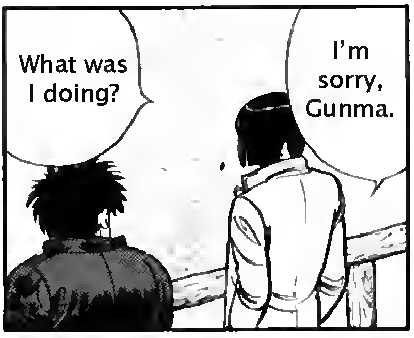
...what do you plan on telling her?
If you ever find this Yuki...
Mm-hm.
MUNCH
MUNCH
Going out on your search again, Gunma?
...
I did. She ain't in it.
Why don't you just check the phone book instead of wandering the streets?
Hmm, See ya later!
I dun- no.
Junko! Gunma's on his way out!
Junko!
What on earth is that girl doing?
VEEEEEH

Well, I'm outta here.
But Gunm
VEEEEEH
...
...
VEEEH
!!

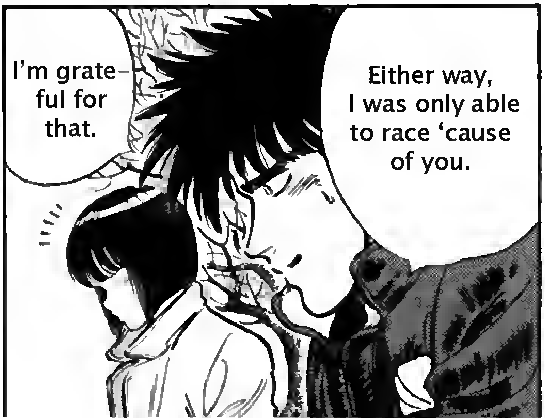
Yuki...
SPLASH
SPLASH
SPLASH
SPLASH
SPLASH
SPLASH
SPLASH
Ph-ew.
THUMP
Urngh...
Huff
Huff
Huff

I was surpri-sed.
Kuroi told me last night, I mean... how you've been my sponsor and all that.
I've been lookin' for you since last night.
Oh...
Oh...


Because I kept it secret.
I'm the one that's gotta apologize. You were takin' care of me for a whole year, and I didn't even call you once.

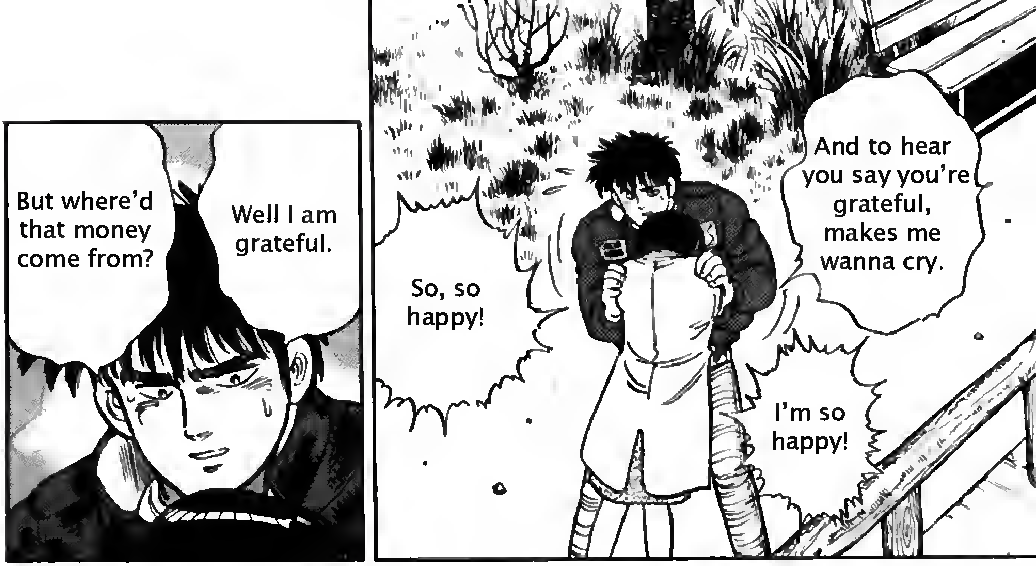

What was I doing?
I'm sorry, Gunma.

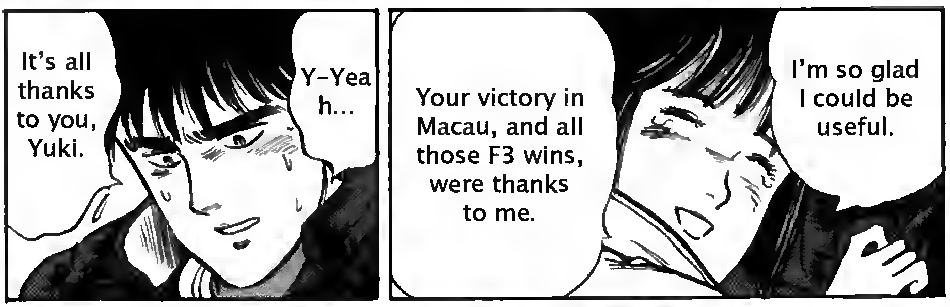
I thought you might get mad.
...


I'm grate-ful for that.
Either way, I was only able to race 'cause of you.

SCRATCH
SCRATCH
I'm so happy right now.
That maybe you'd tell me to stop doing it, and you'd get mad.
And I got torace in Macau.
Then, the next thing I know I'm racing F3.
Why the hell would I get mad?
Why would I be mad?
I fell into FJ without no money or car, just barely gettin' by.
All I did was pay some money.
No, it's because of your skill.
It's all thanks to you.
...
How'd you do it?
Money ...
...
...

Hey, I saw you in Macau. On TV!
The first Japanese driver to win! It made the headlines!
I was so excited!
Was it from Shoma?
Does he know about it?
You just missed winning series champion, but you had an amazing run!
Yuki! How'd you pay all that money!?
Did you do somethin' wrong?
Yu...
Yuki ...
I'm so happy!
Yu...
I mean, I really thought you'd be mad.
I thought you'd hit me.

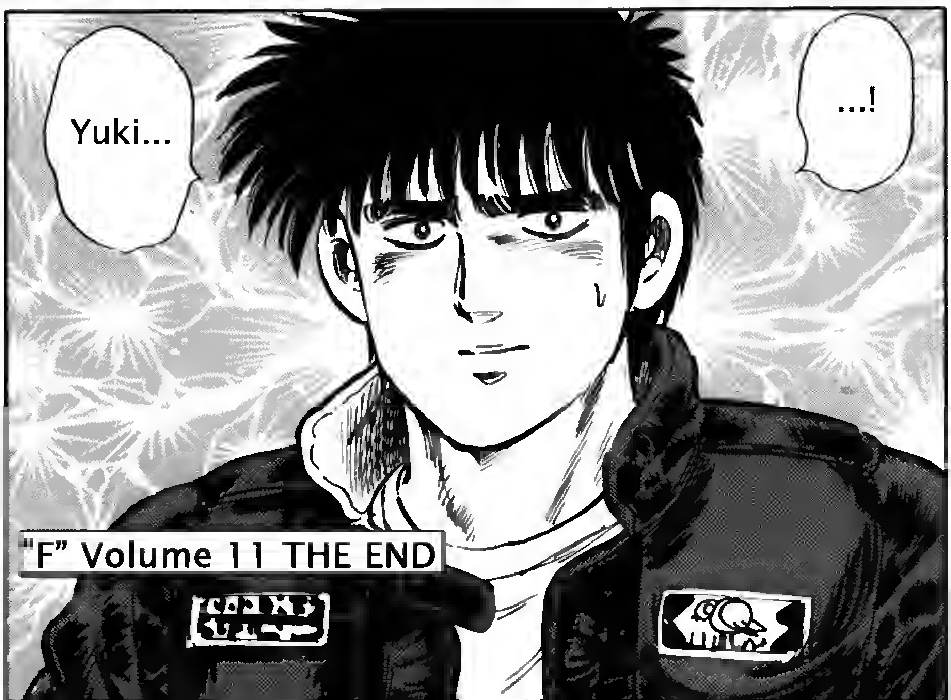

But where'd that money come from?
Well I am grateful.
So, so happy!
And to hear you say you're grateful, makes me wanna cry.
I'm so happy!


It's all thanks to you, Yuki.
Y-Yeah...
Your victory in Macau, and all those F3 wins, were thanks to me.
I'm so glad I could be useful.

?
Then Gunma, can you do me a favor?

...to marry me!
I want you...

Please marry me!
Okay?


Yuki...
...!
"F" Volume 11 THE END

F VOL.11

Author
ROKUDA NOBORU

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